

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

CK-UOG-044
CS 1602
Cascade River Overlook

Historic Name	Cascade River Overlook	CS #	1602
Other Name	New name: Cascade River Wayside	SHPO Inv #	CK-UOG-044
Location	Both sides of TH 61 at the Cascade River	Hwy District Reference	TH 61 1A 100
City/Township	Unorganized Territory	Acres	5 118
County	Cook	Rest Area Class	4
Twp Rng Sec	60N 2W Sec 1	SP #	1602 61-1-45-2
USGS Quad	Deer Yard Lake	SHPO Review #	
UTM	Z15 E685790 N5286500	MHS Photo #	013542.06-23 013543.01-17
Designer	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch Minn Dept of Highways (MHD) (bridge)	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Nic 1.09 Nic 1.10 Nic 5.07 Nic 5.08 Nic 5.09 Nic 5.17 Nic 5.30 Ols 1.45 Ols 1.46 Ols 1.47 Ols 1.48
Builder	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)	National Register Status	Eligible, see Statement of Significance Now listed: see http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf for additional information.
Historic Use	Roadside Parking Area Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam	Historic Context	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960
Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam	List of Standing Structures	
Yr of Landscape Design	1934-35	Feat#	Feature Type
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered	Year Built	
Review Required	Yes		

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Bridge/Culvert	1932	10-11-97
02	Overlook Wall	1934-35	
03	Curb, Stone	1935	
04	Trail Steps	Ca. 1935	
05	Retaining Wall	Ca. 1934	
06	Retaining Wall	Ca. 1981	
07	Retaining Wall	Ca. 1981	

Prep by
Gemini Research
Dec. 98 G1. 10

Prep for
Site Development Unit
Cultural Resources Unit
Environmental Studies Unit

Final Report Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

■ BRIEF

The Cascade River Overlook is located along an approximately 550'-long stretch of T.H. 61 at the mouth of the Cascade River. The site is within Cascade State Park and within the bounds of Superior National Forest.

Note: property listed on National Register much larger than original inventory; listed property size is 118 acre parcel. See <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/site/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf> for additional information.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Bridge 5132. Built 1932 by MHD. Bridge 5132 is an intact, reinforced concrete, filled spandrel arch bridge that carries T.H. 61 over the Cascade River. The bridge has a single 30' span and carries a 38'-wide roadway. It has unornamented spandrel walls and no railings. The stone overlook wall (see below) was built over the top of the bridge on the southern side of the roadway. The bridge plate reads: "Minnesota Highway Dept. Bridge No. 5132. 1932." Metal guardrails have been added on both sides of the T.H. 61 roadway over the bridge. On the northern side of T.H. 61, pedestrians cross the bridge using a gravel footpath edged with square timbers and a modern metal and wood bridge railing. On the southern side of T.H. 61, pedestrians cross the bridge on the overlook wall's walkway, which was originally flagstone and is now concrete.

Overlook Wall. Built 1934-1935 by the CCC. The principal structure on the site is a curved, 535'-long, stone overlook wall that was built on the shore of Lake Superior (and on the southern edge of T.H. 61) to provide a view of both the lake and the mouth of the Cascade River. The wall is built of random rubble (and, in some areas, roughly coursed) pieces of dark brown gabbro with light mortar joints. The wall is 18" thick and laid on a battered stone footing. The northern face (toward the highway) rises above an adjacent walkway that was originally flagstone. The southern face (toward the lake) is much taller and its height varies with the terrain. The wall has masonry of excellent quality. The stones were carefully selected and laid. The stone is both square-cut and irregularly-shaped, and many triangular pieces were randomly included. Drainage spouts, which extend from the parking area through the wall to its southern face, are finely outlined with small slabs of stone.

The wall begins near station 1107, curves eastward along the shoreline, crosses Bridge 5132, and ends several feet east of the bridge. The wall has two lookout bays: a rectangular lookout bay (about 7'6" wide) near its midpoint (about 235' from the western end of the wall) and a curving lookout bay (about 15' wide) located just west of the bridge (about 128' from the eastern end of the wall). Approximately 100'-long guardrails have been added to both ends of the overlook wall.

The entire length of the wall was originally lined with a flagstone walkway. The flagstone was widened within the lookout bays to form flagstone terraces. The flagstone has been covered with poured concrete to form a 3'6"-wide poured concrete walkway. One effect of the concrete covering has been to reduce the height of the northern face of the wall.

There are three paths of descent from the wall to the shoreline. The first is located at the eastern end of the overlook wall where a set of stone steps wraps around the end of the wall. The stone steps meet a 35'-long set of wooden trail steps that has a round timber railing. The wooden trail steps lead to two stone steps that pass through an opening in the eastern Lower Retaining Wall (see below) and onto the rocky shore.

The second path of descent is located at the western end of the overlook wall where two large stone steps (3' wide and 5' wide) wrap around the end of the wall. The steps lead onto a footpath that travels down to the lakeshore where more trail steps are hewn from the rock.

A third route from the wall to the lakeshore was created circa 1981 when the MnDNR cut an opening on the eastern side of the overlook wall's curved lookout bay. Here an 8'-long set of five stone steps (with a curving round timber railing) lead down to a 15" by 4'6" gravel landing. The descent continues with a 21'-long set of wooden trail steps (with a timber railing) that follow the western bank of the river. The route continues with three stone steps that pass through a 4'-wide opening in the western Lower Retaining Wall (see below), and ends at the rocky lakeshore.

Stone Curbing. Built 1935 by the CCC. Intact stone curbing lines the principal parking area's narrow, oval-shaped, grassy island. The stones are dark reddish-black in color. They have been nearly buried by the asphalt paving material.

Dry Stone Retaining Wall. Built circa 1934-1935 by the CCC. A dry stone retaining wall is located near the northern edge of the T.H. 61 right-of-way just west of the river. The wall runs parallel with highway. The wall was missed during fieldwork so is not described herein.

Trail Steps. Built 1934-1935 (by the CCC), circa 1981 (for the MnDNR), and some portions perhaps more recently. The site includes six sets of rustic trail steps of three types: 1) hewn from the natural rock, 2) created with slabs of stone set into place with and without mortar, and 3) built with squared timbers packed into the earth. Three of the six sets lead south from the overlook wall to the water's edge. The other three lead north from T.H. 61 into the state park land (on both the western and eastern banks of the Cascade River). Most of the trail steps probably date from the 1934-1935 CCC work. Some recent wooden steps may be replacements of steps from the 1930s that had become worn with use. The six sets include:

-- steps descending to the lake from the overlook wall's curved lookout bay (described under Overlook Wall above).

-- steps descending to the lake from the eastern end of the overlook wall (described under Overlook Wall above).

-- steps descending to the lake from the western end of the overlook wall (described under Overlook Wall above).

-- steps built of concrete edged with square timbers (with round timber railings) located near the western end of the bridge. These steps lead north from the highway onto the "West River Trail" that climbs the western bank of the river (see Other Landscape Features below).

-- steps built of hewn stone and of square timbers (with round timber railings), located near the eastern end of the bridge. These steps lead north from the highway onto the "East River Trail" that climbs the forested eastern bank of the river (see Other Landscape Features below).

-- earthen steps edged with hewn stone located at the northeastern corner of the parking area on the northern side of T.H. 61. They also lead to the "West River Trail" (see Other Landscape Features below).

Lower Retaining Walls. Built circa 1981 for the MnDNR. The lower retaining walls, located immediately below the overlook wall, consist of two segments of wall that flank the mouth of the Cascade River. The walls were built of random rubble gabbro that matches the overlook wall. The western segment of the lower retaining wall is 23'6" long and 2'4" thick. It has a 4'-wide pedestrian opening with three gracefully curving stone steps (with 1' and 2' treads) that lead visitors through the wall and onto the massive rocks (doused with crashing waves) that form the shore of the lake at the mouth of the river. The eastern segment of the retaining wall is 45' long and 2'4" thick. It has a 3'-wide pedestrian opening and two curved stone steps that lead to the rocky shore on the eastern side of the river's mouth. The ends of both wall segments were designed to merge naturally into the rock formations on the shore. The upper course of the walls consists of narrow slabs of stone that form a cap.

OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site covers an approximately 550'-long stretch of T.H. 61 located primarily west of the Cascade River, but also including about 75' east of the river. It provides spectacular views of Lake Superior and of the falls that comprise the Cascade River's final descent into the lake. The site is rocky, hilly, and thickly forested.

Historic photo captions and CCC reports indicate that the shoulders of the highway were shaped and planted with local stock as part of the project. (For example, a Sept. 1934 CCC report mentions planting two types of honeysuckle, dogwood, balsam, and spruce.) No original planting plan has been located.

Most of the site consists of a highway pull-off drive and parking area on the southern side of T.H. 61 that serves the stone overlook wall. The parking area (originally gravel, now paved with asphalt) has a narrow, oval-shaped, grassy island that is lined with stone curbing, which separates the parking area from the T.H. 61 roadway. There was originally a line of telephone poles located a few feet south of the overlook wall along the lakeshore. These were installed in December 1934 through January 1935 to serve the CCC camp located east of the site. (They have been removed.) The trails of Cascade State Park are located north, west, and east of the site.

On the northern side of T.H. 61 is a second parking area located northwest of the overlook wall's parking area. It is probably newer than the parking area near the overlook wall and measures about 300' long (east to west) and about 20' wide. It is paved with asphalt and curbsless. The northern side is lined with a rocky, wooded hillside that rises from the highway. A set of trail steps leads into the woods from the northeastern corner of the parking area.

Historic photos show that there was originally a timber and cable guardrail along the northern side of T.H. 61 across from the overlook wall. This has been replaced by a metal and timber guardrail.

The "West River Trail" leaves the highway and follows the western bank of the river upward along the falls to a footbridge that was originally built by the CCC in 1935. The trail crosses

the river to the east and descends back to T.H. 61 on the riverbank's "East River Trail." These trails also extend farther north into the state park.

The entrances to the West and East River Trails were apparently originally marked at the highway shoulder by arrowhead-shaped signs. An August 1942 photo shows the entrance to the Cascade River Trail (apparently another name for the West and East River Trails) marked by an arrowhead-shaped sign that apparently read: "Cascade River. Named for the series of beautiful waterfalls near its mouth. Walk south [sic] along side of the stream, cross the bridge, and return to the highway on the other side" (Olson photo album Vol. 1, pg. 45). The sign was probably erected by the MHD. (Note: A 1942 MHD drawing depicts a similarly shaped sign that may have been erected on the eastern bank of the river. It had a Highway 61 symbol at the bottom and read: "Cascade Falls 300 ft. right. Follow foot trail along east side of river to footbridge crossing, return along foot trail on west side of river" (Olson photo album, Vol. 1, intro. section).

■ **SETTING**

The site is located in a rural, forested, scenic area on the shore of Lake Superior at the mouth of the Cascade River. It is surrounded by mixed evergreen and deciduous forests and the waters of Lake Superior. It is located within Cascade State Park and Superior National Forest. Picnic and campgrounds that were built by the CCC are located nearby (east of the site).

The Cascade is a turbulent river that flows through a twisting, rocky gorge in a series of rapids until it reaches Lake Superior. It descends 900' in its last three miles and, in its last mile, has six falls, one of which is about 40'.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

An original plan of the overlook wall has not been located.

The flagstone that once lined the overlook wall has been covered with poured concrete to form a 3'6"-wide poured concrete walkway. (One effect of the concrete covering has been to reduce the height of the northern face of the wall.) In circa 1981 an opening was cut in the curved lookout bay and trail steps (stone and wooden) were added to create a route to the shoreline. The lower retaining walls and some associated trail steps were also added circa 1981. Approximately 100'-long guardrails have been added to both ends of the overlook wall. The original timber and cable guardrail along the northern side of T.H. 61 has been replaced by a metal and timber guardrail.

Despite these changes, the site retains essential integrity of location, setting, workmanship, design, materials, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The overlook wall and lower retaining walls are in fair to good condition. The trail steps and bridge are in fair condition. The stone curbing is in poor condition.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the construction of the Cascade River Overlook, this site was a shallow point that projected into Lake Superior at the mouth of the Cascade River. There was a gravel pull-off area adjacent to the highway that was edged with guardrails built of timber and poured concrete. Bridge 5132, built by the highway department in 1932, replaced a previous culvert that carried the roadway over the river. As part of the construction of the bridge, the highway department moved the mouth of the Cascade River about 350' east to its current location.

Construction of the Site

The Cascade River Overlook was developed within the 2,300-acre Cascade Wayside, which the MHD purchased in 1934. (See "Cascade Wayside (now Cascade State Park)" below.) The overlook was constructed between July of 1934 and June of 1935 by the Spruce Creek Camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which worked in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) to develop Cascade Wayside and to improve several-mile stretches of T.H. 61. The Spruce Creek CCC Camp was established in 1934 and was headquartered just east of the overlook. (This CCC camp was named the "Spruce Creek Camp," rather than the "Cascade River Camp," because another CCC camp known as the Cascade River Camp had already been established in 1933 by the U.S. Forest Service several miles to the north (Donnelly Aug. 31, 1934:1).) The Spruce Creek CCC Camp was under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, the Minnesota Parks Division of the State Department of Conservation, and the U.S. Army.

The Cascade River Overlook was built as part of a 10.2-mile-long roadside development project that also included the Spruce Creek Culvert (Bridge 8292) about 2.5 miles to the west (see separate inventory form) and extensive roadside landscaping. Roadside development plans were drawn by the MHD's Arthur R. Nichols (Consulting Landscape Architect) and Harold E. Olson (Engineer for Roadside Development). The title sheet of the construction plans was signed in August of 1934 by C. W. Lilly (Engineer of Plans), P. D. Mold (District Engineer), O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer), and J. T. Ellison (Chief Engineer and Deputy Commissioner). Nichols, Olson, S. Rex Green (Right-of-Way Engineer), Harold W. Lathrop (Supervisor of State Parks), Reuben W. Law (Director of State Park CCC work), other state officials, and visitors such as Theodore Wirth of the Minneapolis Parks Department frequently visited the site to inspect progress.

Monthly narrative reports from the Spruce Creek CCC Camp superintendent to the National Park Service provide many details about the project. Work at the site began in July of 1934. Camp Superintendent Leo W. Donnelly reported in August that A. R. Nichols "visited out project on August 1 and again during the past week. He is very enthusiastic about the work we are doing and has been of considerable assistance to us in laying out and executing this part of the program." By the end of September, the CCC had developed 6,000' of walking trails in the Cascade Wayside, built a service road into the CCC camp site, planted 1.6 miles of highway slopes, landscaped ledges, and had begun to build the overlook wall. By the end of November 1934, 165 lineal feet of the overlook wall had been built. Donnelly reported, "We have one skilled workman employed on this job and four enrolled men who are being trained as stonemasons. The enrolled men are getting to be better mechanics every day" (Donnelly Aug. 31, 1934:2; Oct. 2, 1934:2; Dec. 1, 1934:3).

During December and January, the overlook wall was enclosed within a timber and canvas shelter so work could continue through the winter. Donnelly reported, "we have been successful in protecting the finished work from freezing temperatures. The enrolled men engaged in this work are becoming quite excellent in laying the stone and we continue to receive many favorable comments on the quality of work we are doing. We have obtained splendid cooperation from the Army in securing canvas tarpaulins and heating equipment for this project" (Donnelly Feb. 2, 1935:4).

The subsequent camp superintendent, Udert W. Hella, reported at the end of March that an average of 14 men per day had been employed on the overlook wall during February and March, and that by May 31, 1935, the overlook had been completed with the exception of the curbing and island. During the spring of 1935, the CCC camp also built an entrance road from T.H. 61 to the CCC camp, constructed a log footbridge (supported by 14" steel channel beams) over the Cascade River and connecting the foot trails, and built a native rock bridge over Babeneau Creek (Hella May 31, 1935:2). A public picnic area was also developed about 500' east of the overlook (near the CCC camp) during the summer of 1935 (Anderson 1990/1993:E23 and Hella Apr. 1 to Oct. 1, 1935:5). (These structures are outside of current Mn/DOT right-of-way.)

The Cascade River Overlook served as a model highway development project statewide, and possibly nationally. Historian Rolf Anderson indicates that, according to Camp Superintendent U. W. Hella, whom Anderson interviewed, the Cascade project "served as a demonstration project of how natural rock outcroppings might best be accommodated within the highway backstops" (Anderson 1990/1993:E23; Hella 1990; Anderson 1998).

Perhaps because it was a model, the Cascade River Overlook and nearby roadside development work were inspected not only by the usual National Park Service inspectors, but also by numerous members of the highway department, staff of the Minneapolis Parks Department, CCC officials, members of the legislature, and Canadian officials. On May 18, 1935, for example, the CCC camp hosted a dinner that was followed by an inspection of the overlook and adjacent Cascade Wayside structures. Those attending the event included Harold W. Lathrop (Supervisor of State Parks), N. W. Elsberg (Commissioner of Highways), O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer), J. T. Ellison (Chief Engineer), S. Rex Green (Right-of-way Engineer), P. D. Mold (District Engineer), George Larson (District Maintenance Engineer), L. C. Allen (Assistant Engineer), J. M. Brown (District Engineer of the Indian Department), Senator C. E. Adams, State Representative W. E. Hastings, and two Canadian public works officials.

Spruce Creek CCC Camp

The Spruce Creek CCC Camp (Company 2702, DSP No. 5; known after 1935 as SP-13), which built the overlook, was established on July 24, 1934. Spruce Creek was one of 13 CCC camps that operated in Cook County. Its first superintendent was Leo W. Donnelly (who served between July 1934 and February 14, 1935), followed by U. W. Hella (who became superintendent on February 14, 1935). (Hella later served as Director of the State Parks Division of the Minnesota Department of Conservation.) Camp Supervisory Personnel in March of 1935 were Hella (Superintendent), George Bayle (Landscape Architect), C. G. Starr (Engineer), James Clement (Engineer), Don Colton (Non-technical Foreman), Joseph Hinchcliff (Non-technical Foreman), Albert J. Skelly (Non-technical Foreman), Helmer T. Lane (Non-technical Foreman), and Carl R. Anderson (Facilitating Personnel) (Hella Mar. 30, 1935).

From July to October 1934, the CCC company's 200 enrollees lived in temporary quarters at the vacated Caribou Lake CCC Camp (F-11), which was located about eight miles west of the Cascade River. Using trucks borrowed from the Gooseberry River CCC Camp and tools borrowed from the highway department, 60 men started work at the Cascade River on July 26. Each day the men were transported to the work site at the Cascade, reportedly an inconvenience of time and equipment (Donnelly Aug. 31, 1934:2).

The permanent Spruce Creek CCC Camp, located just east of the overlook wall near the present site of a public picnic ground, was built in September through November of 1934 under the supervision of the Army. The CCC moved into the new barracks on October 16. In November, a camp spring was developed and a water system installed, and during the winter a well was drilled (Hella Mar. 31, 1935). In all, ten barracks were constructed, all of which were intended to be used as tourist cabins when the site was turned over to the State Parks Division for public park use (Meyer 1991:138). During 1934 and most of 1935, the majority of the Spruce Creek Camp's enrollees were from northern Minnesota. In November of 1935, many of these men were replaced by 170 enrollees from Missouri.

The Spruce Creek CCC Camp was the first of four CCC camps in the state that were sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Highways. (Most of the state's other CCC camps were sponsored by agencies such as the Department of Conservation's State Parks Division, the U.S. Forest Service, the Soil Conservation Service, etc.) The success of the Spruce Creek CCC Camp's work inspired the establishment of three additional MHD-sponsored CCC camps. They were located on Mille Lacs Lake, Leech Lake, and at the Knife River on Lake Superior. Superintendent Hella's Oct. 1-Nov. 30, 1935, monthly report quotes the following newspaper article that announced the plans:

NORTH SHORE [SIC] GETS THREE NEW CCC CAMPS

The success of roadside development work accomplished by a north shore CCC camp last year under the direction of the State Highway Department has moved the Department of the Interior to establish three new camps to continue this activity in northern Minnesota.

The camps, containing 200 men each, have been located near Garrison on Mille Lacs Lake, two miles north of Walker on Leech Lake, and near Knife River on Lake Superior.

In addition, the Gooseberry River Camp on the North Shore [not a highway department camp] has been authorized to do 5,000 man-days of roadside development work and the Spruce Creek Camp between Lutsen and Grand Marais has been instructed to continue its work. It was the latter camp that decided federal authorities to expand roadside development projects (Hella Oct. 1-Nov. 30, 1935:2).

The four CCC camps sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Highways were the following:

- Lakeshore (Camp SP-19), located near Knife River on the North Shore
- Leech Lake (Camp SP-16), located near Whipholt on Leech Lake
- Mille Lacs Lake (Camp SP-15), located at Garrison on Mille Lacs Lake
- Spruce Creek (Camp SP-13), located near Cascade River on the North Shore

The four camps were established specifically for highway improvements and were supervised by the National Park Service. Each camp had approximately 200 enrollees who worked on

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roadside landscaping and erosion control, and constructed wayside rests, bridges, culverts, and similar highway structures.

Nine sites constructed by these camps are included in this Historic Roadside Development Structures Inventory (see individual inventory forms):

Built by the Spruce Creek Camp
Cascade River Overlook (includes Bridge 5132)
Spruce Creek Culvert (Bridge 8292)

Built by the Mille Lacs Lake Camp
Garrison Concourse
Garrison Creek Culvert (Bridge 5266)
Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265)
Garrison Rest Area
Kenney Lake Overlook
T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay
Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355)

No works by the Lakeshore or Leech Lake CCC camps are included in this study. One of the principal accomplishments of the Lakeshore Camp is the elaborate Knife River Historical Marker on old Highway 61 several miles northeast of Duluth. The site is intact but in fragile condition. It is no longer on Mn/DOT right-of-way and is now within the jurisdiction of St. Louis County Highway Department. No standing structures built by the Leech Lake CCC Camp, which only operated for six months, are known to be extant.

Cascade Wayside (now Cascade State Park)

The Cascade River Overlook was part of a large highway wayside park known as the Cascade Wayside. The MHD purchased 2,300 acres adjacent to T.H. 61 in 1934 and Cascade became the largest of the department's wayside parks. It was intended that the park be eventually turned over to the Department of Conservation's State Parks Division. State park historian Roy Meyer writes:

While the Corps of Engineers was developing recreation sites in far western Minnesota, the state highway department was doing much the same thing on the North Shore, where it acquired land in two places [the other at the mouth of the Temperance River]. After completing U.S. Highway 61, the department purchased some 2,300 acres of land near the mouth of the Cascade River, about sixty miles up the lakeshore from Gooseberry Falls State Park. An ECW [CCC] camp moved in on July 1, 1934, and erected ten barracks, which were intended for use as tourist cabins when the park was in operation. A picnic area and a few foot trails were developed, but the main thrust of the highway department's work was to eliminate the scars left by road construction (Meyer 1991:138).

Cascade Wayside (except for the land immediately adjacent to T.H. 61) left MHD jurisdiction and was transferred to the Department of Conservation in 1957 when the state legislature designated Cascade as an official state park. Plans for improvements to the park were developed in 1954-1955 by landscape architect Arthur R. Nichols who, at this time, was consulting for the State Parks Division of the Department of Conservation. Cascade State Park now covers 2,813 acres with 12 miles of Lake Superior shoreline. Located within the

boundaries of the park are the Sawtooth Mountain range, the Cascade River, and nine streams including Spruce Creek, Babeneau Creek, and Black Point Creek.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

There have apparently been no previous cultural resource reviews of the property.

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Cascade River Overlook, built in 1934-1935 by the CCC, is one of 37 stone overlook walls recorded in this inventory. It is one of 14 sites in the inventory known, or suspected, to have been built by the CCC. It is one of more than 60 sites that were designed by, or whose design is attributed to, Arthur R. Nichols.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1889-1960." It is recommended that the Cascade River Overlook is ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it meets the following registration requirements:

Significant to the History of Roadside Development. The Cascade River Overlook is one of nine properties in this inventory that were built by the four CCC camps in Minnesota that were sponsored by the MHD. (All four camps were dedicated to roadside development.) The MHD-sponsored CCC camps improved many miles of trunk highway, as well as constructing 9 of the 68 Depression-era properties in this inventory. The nine properties are testimony to the success of the partnership between the MHD, the National Park Service, and the CCC that produced functional, long-lasting, and aesthetically-superior roadside amenities that continue to enhance the experience of the traveling public today. These New Deal-era sites represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. Cascade River is an excellent example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities, built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies, that met the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to the nation's unemployed during the Depression. (National Register Criterion A.)

Significant to Transportation History. The Cascade River Overlook is a pivotal roadside development facility on T.H. 61 that dates from the MHD's early construction and improvement of the highway (which was known until 1934 as T.H. 1). T.H. 1/T.H. 61, designed primarily as a scenic highway to carry tourists along the pristine North Shore of Lake Superior, is significant within the development of the state's trunk highway system. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. Cascade River Overlook is a massive, intact, stone overlook wall. The site is an excellent example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to a roadside park. According to U. W. Hella, former superintendent of the CCC camp that built the site, the Cascade River project served as a demonstration project [at the state level, and perhaps nationally] of the technique of using natural rock outcroppings to create a scenic overlook within the highway backslope. The site has masonry of excellent quality with stones that were skillfully cut, selected, and laid. The site displays the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that characterize both the Rustic style and federal relief construction in Minnesota. Furthermore, Cascade is an important

example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols. (National Register Criterion C.)

The property may also be associated with the following historic contexts: "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943," "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945," and "Minnesota State Park Development, 1889-1943."

Bridge 5132 was not included in the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

The inventoried features on this site are linked to, and integrated with, trails, footbridges, etc., in the rest of Cascade State Park.

This study inventoried only features that were immediately adjacent to the T.H. 61 roadway. Features located several feet from the roadway were considered to be within the state park for the purposes of this inventory.

T.H. 61 past this site is very busy during the summer months.

■ REFERENCES

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Anderson, Rolf T. "Minnesota State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources." National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. Sept. 3, 1988.

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Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Highways of Minnesota for 1935-1936. January 1, 1937.

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Donnelly, Leo W. (CCC Camp Superintendent). Narrative reports to the Division of State Parks, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. Aug. 1, 1934; Aug. 31, 1934; Oct. 2, 1934; Nov. 1, 1934; Dec. 1, 1934; and Feb. 2, 1935. [In National Archives, copy in SHPO files, copy in Mn/DOT Site Development Unit's Cascade River Overlook inventory file.]

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1935, and Oct. 1-No. 30, 1935. [In National Archives, copy in SHPO files, copy in Mn/DOT Site Development Unit's Cascade River Overlook inventory file.]

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■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Superior National Forest

The Cascade River Overlook and Cascade State Park lie within the Superior National Forest, which was established in 1909 when 36,000 acres were set aside for preservation. The forest has been enlarged considerably since, and today it covers nearly 3 million acres. Its

northern border parallels the Canadian boundary for 150 miles. Approximately 1,250,000 acres of the forest are within a State game refuge. The forest contains over 5,000 lakes.

Cascade River

The Cascade River, named for the waterfalls at its mouth, was once known as the "Cut Face River." The river flows through a 50'-deep, twisting, rocky gorge in a series of rapids until it reaches Lake Superior. The Cascade River descends 900' in its last three miles. The 1939 *Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan* states: "The Cascade River varies from ten feet to about two rods in width. It is cutting deep into igneous rock, and in its last mile to the lake [Superior], it plunges in a series of six falls, the highest of which is approximately forty feet" (*Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan 1939:95*).

Local Stone

The gabbro used to construct the overlook was probably quarried locally. Duluth gabbro is an igneous rock that differs from granite because it has feldspar which gives it its green, dark gray, or black color. The stone is commercially referred to as "green granite," "black granite," and "trap rock." As early as 1896, gabbro was quarried in and around Duluth. There were many quarries in the Arrowhead Region including quarries in the Superior National Forest 18 miles southeast of Ely, an Arrowhead Granite Company quarry near Cook, and the McDonald Quarry near Angora. Gabbro was used to construct dozens of retaining walls, bridges, overlooks, and state park structures along Lake Superior, as well as many historic buildings, bridges, and other structures in Duluth.

Lake Superior and T.H. 61

Lake Superior is the largest body of fresh water in the world. The lake is 383 miles long, 160 miles wide, and is 489' to 1,400' deep. The Ojibwe called the Lake "Kitchigumi," meaning "Great Water." The early French traders called the lake "Lac Superieur" because it was located at the head of the Great Lakes. By the early 1920s, Duluth and the North Shore area had become a mecca for tourists.

Trunk Highway 1 along the North Shore was built during the 1920s and 1930s and named the "Lake Superior International Highway" by the highway department in 1926. Its number was changed from 1 to 61 in 1934. The highway was the only thoroughfare to serve North Shore towns in Minnesota and to provide access to the Canadian North Shore from the state. It was specifically designed (and in some places, realigned) to provide outstanding views of the lake. Between Duluth and the Canadian border, T.H. 61 travels approximately 165 miles through three counties: St. Louis, Lake, and Cook. With the completion of the highway, recreation and tourism became important components of the North Shore economy.