

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

CW-GRT-003
CS 1803
Kenney Lake Overlook

Historic Name Other Name	Kenney Lake Overlook	CS # SHPO Inv #	1803 CW-GRT-003
Location	SW side of TH 18 2.4 mi NW of jct TH 169 and TH 18	Hwy District Reference	TH 18 3A 18.1
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Garrison Township Crow Wing 44N 28W Sec 2 Garrison Z15 E435110 N5130550	Acres Rest Area Class	2 4
Designer	Skooglun, H O, Natl Park Serv Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	SP #	18-18-24 1803-01
Builder	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	MHS Photo #	013531.17-24 013532.00-08
Yr of Landscape Design	1938-39	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Nic 5.10 Nic 7.32 Ols 1.54
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
Historic Context	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		

List of Standing Structures

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built
01	Overlook Wall	1939
02	Bench(es), Stone	1939
03	Curb, Stone	1939

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

Fieldwork Date
08-03-97

Prep by
Gemini Research
Dec. 98 G1. 30

Prep for
Site Development Unit
Cultural Resources Unit
Environmental Studies Unit

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

Kenney Lake Overlook is a 2-acre site that is located on the southwestern side of T.H. 18 about 2.4 miles northwest of the junction of T.H. 169 and T.H. 18. The site is located in Section 2 of Garrison Township.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Overlook Wall. Built 1939 by the CCC. Designed by H. O. Skooglun of the National Park Service. The overlook wall stands between T.H. 18 and Kenney Lake and overlooks the lake to the west. The wall was built of gray, random ashlar, rockfaced Isle granite laid on a stone footing. Some of the pieces of granite have exposed drilling marks from the quarry blasting. The wall is about 18" thick and has 30"-square piers spaced at intervals of about 24'. The upper surface of the wall is smooth while the tops of the piers are rockfaced. Along the inside of the wall is a 6'-wide grassy walkway that is edged with a granite curb.

The wall has a long, curving form that terminates with unique features at its northern and southern ends. At the northern end of the wall is a semicircular bay (called a "niche" on the plan) that has a 12' radius. The grassy floor of the bay is at a lower elevation than the majority of the overlook wall, creating the sensation of a cozy, sheltered outdoor room. Three wide stone steps, made with very large slabs of granite (rather than smaller pieces as drawn on the plan), lead from the overlook wall's walkway into the niche. There is a stone drainage slit on the northern side of the curved wall of the bay.

The southern end of the wall ends with a rectangular lookout bay and a series of granite steps and flagstone terraces. The rectangular bay is about 55' wide. It has a grassy, curb-lined, terrace that is slightly lower in elevation than the overlook wall's walkway. (Some of the curb stone is buried beneath the sod.) The grassy terrace is reached via three granite steps that lead down from the overlook wall's walkway. In the center of the grassy terrace is a sunken, rectangular, flagstone terrace (about 14' by 7'6") that is reached via two sets of granite steps (one set on the northern side and one set on the southern side) that lead down from the grassy terrace. There are three steps in each set. From the sunken flagstone terrace, five 14'-wide granite steps lead to a lower flagstone landing that measures about 14' by 4'. Five more granite steps lead from the landing to the shore of the lake. All 16 steps are shallow and constructed of very large, long, smooth slabs of granite. The flagstone terraces are unusually well made, with large, carefully-chosen pieces of smooth granite in shades of red, gray, and black. Many of the pieces are triangular.

Stone Benches. Built 1939 by the CCC. There were originally two curving stone benches resting on stone pedestals within the semicircular bay ("niche"). One of the benches is missing but one is extant.

Granite Curbing. Built 1939 by the CCC. There is original granite curbing edging the overlook wall's walkway, and edging the western side of the parking area's narrow grassy island. The curb stones are about 10" wide. The rest of the site's original curbing is either missing or covered with asphalt.

■ **OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS**

The site has a curving, asphalt-paved, pull-off drive and parking area. The drive creates a narrow grassy island between the parking area and T.H. 18. The original plans specify that the drive and parking area be paved with tarvia (an asphalt-like surface). Both the parking area and the island were originally lined with stone curbing. There is an original (or early) catch basin at the western edge of the parking area near its midpoint.

The plans specify five log benches to be located near the lakeshore and at the southern end of the wall, and a "future wood dock" to be built at the base of the stone steps.

The original planting plan incorporates existing oak, birch, Norway pine, and other trees at the site and specifies that a few additional elm, birch, and spruce be transplanted onto the site from the surrounding area.

Most of the site is planted with grass (now overgrown). There are two large oak trees at the northern end. (These trees are drawn on the plan.) There is a mature pine on the western side of the wall north of its midpoint (the tree is also possibly drawn on the plan), and another mature pine at the southern end of the wall. The island is planted only with grass -- the "new elms" specified on the plan are not standing. The shoreline west of the wall is sandy with many cattails.

■ **SETTING**

This 2-acre site is located on the southwestern side of T.H. 18 about 2.4 miles northwest of Garrison. It is located on the eastern end of Kenney Lake. The wall and parking area are standing on a hillside above the elevation of the lake. The site is surrounded by Kenney Lake on the west; T.H. 18, one residence, and a forest on the east; and the wooded T.H. 18 right-of-way on the north and south.

A 1938 plan for T.H. 18 development shows an additional parking area that was to be located about 1000' southeast of this overlook along the southwestern side of T.H. 18. Today there is no evidence of this parking area and it is not known whether it was ever built.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

The site appears to have been to plan.

Several stones are missing and the wall has been crudely remortared in places. (Some of the original stones have rolled down into the lake. They are resting on the sandy bottom just beyond the shore.) One of the stone benches is missing from the northern end of the wall. The plans specify five log seats near the lakeshore and at the southern end of the wall, and a "future wood dock" at the base of the stone steps. These features are missing, or perhaps were never built. The landscaping appears to be overgrown but is mostly consistent with the original design intent.

The site retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The overlook wall is in poor condition. Several stones are missing and the wall has been crudely remortared in places. Some of the original stones have rolled down into the lake, just beyond the shore. One of the stone benches is missing from the northern end of the wall. Some portions of the granite curbing have been covered with asphalt and some curb stones are missing. The site is only minimally maintained. The grass and weeds are being only crudely mowed and the site is quite overgrown.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Kenney Lake Overlook was constructed in 1939 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) working in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways and the National Park Service. The site was built by the enrollees of a CCC camp that was located at the southern edge of Garrison on the western side of T.H. 169. The camp was sponsored by the Department of Highways, supervised by the National Park Service, and operated by the U.S. Army.

The original plans include the notations "Drawn by H. O. Skooglun" and "Designed by H. O. Skooglun." Skooglun worked within the Minnesota Central Design Office of the National Park Service (located in St. Paul), under the supervision of Edward W. Barber, who was chief architect and major designer for the office. Skooglun also designed the Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265), the Garrison Creek Culvert (Bridge 5266), the T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay, and the Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355) -- all located on T.H. 169 a few miles from Kenney Lake (all are included in this inventory). Arthur R. Nichols, Consulting Landscape Architect for the Minnesota Department of Highways during the 1930s, probably participated in the design. He consulted on the design of all seven of the CCC-built sites near Garrison.

The plans were signed in May of 1939 by four officials from the Department of Highways -- Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development), A. R. Nichols (Consulting Landscape Architect), A. W. Moulster (District Engineer), and O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer) -- and three officials representing the National Park Service -- Agge Thompson (CCC Camp Superintendent who signed under "Checked by"), Harold W. Lathrop (Minnesota Department of Conservation Park Authority), and Ed Lasey (Inspector). The signature "Hella" [Udert W. Hella, a Regional Inspector] also appears on the plans. (Udert W. Hella was eventually longtime Director of the Minnesota Department of Conservation's Parks Division.)

A "General Note" on the plans describes the stone to be used in the overlook wall: "Granite masonry wall to be built of native granite taken from the quarries at the south end of Mille Lacs Lake. . . . The wall below grade to be built of fieldstone in mortar. . . . Granite flagstone taken from the quarries at St. Cloud, which have one sawed surface to be used for the steps with flush joints, to be laid in grouting."

The 1938 and 1939 *Annual Report* of the Highway Department's Roadside Development Division indicates that the site was excavated, landscaped, and its parking area surfaced with

gravel in 1938. The masonry overlook was built in 1939 (*Annual Report* 1938:21; 1939:7). The site had been completed by November of 1939, according to a dated historic photo.

Site Development Unit files indicate that in 1961 the Kenney Lake Overlook had drinking water, three picnic tables, two fireplaces, and two toilets.

The Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan and the Garrison CCC Camp

Kenney Lake Overlook was built as part of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan (also known as the Mille Lacs Lake SP-15 project). Operating between September of 1935 and March of 1940, this project improved many miles of T.H. 169 and T.H. 18 west and north of Mille Lacs to facilitate increased recreational and commercial travel. It was the most extensive roadside development project undertaken by the CCC in the state.

This overlook and other components of the project were planned by the Minnesota Department of Highways and the National Park Service, and were built with CCC labor from the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Wayside CCC Camp (Camp SP-15) that was located on the western side of T.H. 169 on the southern edge of Garrison. The first portions of the plan to be developed were a 4-mile section of T.H. 18 northwest of Garrison, a 5.5-mile section of T.H. 169 north of Garrison, and a 7-mile section of T.H. 169 south of Garrison. A construction plan noted: "Ultimate development of the parkway and connecting waysides is to continue around the entire lake, a distance of approximately 90 miles." The project was never completed to the extent planned. However, between 1936 and 1939, the highway department and the CCC constructed at least seven known roadside development projects (with standing structures) in the Garrison area, all of which are extant and are included in this study. They are the following:

- 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)

Historian Rolf Anderson writes:

The principal design work for the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Wayside projects was executed in the [National Park Service's] Minnesota Central Design Office in St. Paul, which was actually a branch office of the National Park Service Regional Office in Omaha. . . . Principal figures included Edward W. Barber, the chief architect and major designer, V. C. Martin, who designed the Kitchen Shelter [at the Garrison Rest Area], Oscar Newstrom, and N. H. Averill who completed many of the master plans and landscape designs. . . . Park Service engineers and landscape architects had experimented with a variety of styles and eventually concluded that buildings constructed with native materials and designed to harmonize with their natural settings were most appropriate (Anderson, "Mille Lacs Lake Kitchen Shelter" 1990:8-5).

CCC Camp SP-15, also known as the Mille Lacs Highway Wayside Camp, was located on the western side of T.H. 169 on the southern edge of Garrison. The camp was established in September of 1935 and was one of four CCC camps in Minnesota that were sponsored

by the Department of Highways. Camp superintendent was Agge Thompson. The camp's 200 enrollees worked primarily on the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Project. Work on the project ended when the men of CCC Camp SP-15 were transferred on March 31, 1940, to the St. Croix Recreational Demonstration Area (now St. Croix State Park).

The Garrison CCC Camp was one 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 Minnesota Department of Conservation (State Parks Division), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Soil Conservation Service.) The first of the four highway department camps was the Spruce Creek Camp that was established on the Cascade River on the North Shore in 1934. The other three highway department CCC camps were established in 1935.

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 roadside development and were supervised by the National Park Service. Each camp had approximately 200 enrollees who worked on roadside landscaping and erosion control, and constructed wayside rests, bridges, culverts, and similar highway structures. Rolf Anderson calls Mille Lacs the "largest and most extensive of these [highway department-sponsored CCC camps]" (Anderson, "Garrison Concourse" 1990:8-3).

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

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 properties built 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 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 operated for only six months, are known to be extant.)

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Kenney Lake Overlook, built in 1939 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. The overlook is one of five sites in the study that were designed by H. O. Skooglun of the National Park Service (NPS), and one of eight sites in the study that were designed by NPS designers (in collaboration with A. R. Nichols).

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the Kenney Lake 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 Kenney Lake 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. These numerous New Deal-era sites represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. Kenney Lake 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.)

Furthermore, the overlook is significant as one of seven sites that were built near Garrison by the CCC as part of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Project. This 4 1/2-year-long roadside development project improved and developed T.H. 169 and T.H. 18 near Garrison for recreational purposes. It was the most extensive roadside development project undertaken by the CCC in the state. The seven properties near Garrison are rare in the state for their variety, design quality, degree of integrity, and close geographic proximity. The properties are testimony to the success of the partnership between the MHD, the National Park Service, and the CCC. This collaboration produced functional, long-lasting, and aesthetically-superior roadside amenities that continue to enhance the experience of the traveling public today. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. Compared to the other 36 overlooks in this inventory, Kenney Lake has an unusually complex design for an overlook of its size. The site is an excellent example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to a roadside development facility. It has masonry of excellent quality with stones that were skillfully cut, selected, and laid. (For example, the granite flagstone -- a well-executed composition of large, angular, smooth pieces of colorful St. Cloud granite -- is one of the most ornate examples of a flagstone terrace documented in this inventory.) 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. (National Register Criterion C.)

The property may also be associated with the "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943" and "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic contexts.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 18 past this site is busy during the summer months and, because of the traffic, the site is difficult to turn into.

The wall is so overgrown that it looks disheveled and possibly abandoned. Its condition is probably inviting vandalism.

■ **REFERENCES**

An Appraisal Inventory of Work Done with WPA and Other Federal Relief Funds Through the Functioning of the Department of Highways, State of Minnesota. May 9, 1938. Minnesota Highway Department Records, Minnesota Historical Society.

Anderson, Rolf T. "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Oct. 9, 1990; amended Aug. 30, 1993.

Anderson, Rolf T. "Garrison Concourse." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Oct. 9, 1990.

Anderson, Rolf T. "Mille Lacs Lake Kitchen Shelter/Garrison Wayside Shelter." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Oct. 9, 1990.

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

Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Highways. 1938 and 1939.

"Master Plan Report - Minnesota S.P. 15 - Mille Lacs Lake." Circa 1930s. Copy in Mn/DOT Site Development Unit flat files.

Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan. Minnesota Department of Conservation. Division of State Parks. March 1939.

Site Plans. Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Mille Lacs is one of the largest lakes in Minnesota with approximately 150 miles of shoreline. T.H. 169 follows the western shore of Mille Lacs Lake for about 20 miles.

The Mille Lacs area has a long tradition of Native American habitation. By the mid-1600s, Mille Lacs was called "Mde Wakan" by the Dakota and was an important religious and cultural center. The Ojibwe called the lake "minsi sagaigon" meaning "everywhere lakes" because of the many lakes located in the vicinity. The French translated the Ojibwe name into "Mille Lacs" meaning "thousand lakes." Mille Lacs is now the cultural center for the Mille Lacs Anishinabe. The Mille Lacs Anishinabe band currently has about 2,800 members.

Kenney Lake was probably named for an early settler.

Local Stone

The granite used to construct this site was apparently obtained from two sources: quarries near Isle (a community located on the southeastern shore of Mille Lacs) and quarries near St. Cloud. The Isle-Warman Creek granite region contains outcroppings of red, gray, and black granite that were quarried by various companies. The Cold Spring Granite Company, for example, operated a quarry about five miles south of Isle as early as 1935. Light gray granite quarried at this site was named Isle Granite and was also marketed under the name of "Cold Spring Pearl White" granite. The St. Cloud-Cold Spring granite region in Stearns County produces a fine-grained granite that ranges in color from black, to red and pink, to a clear white. Granite quarrying began in Stearns County in the 1860s.