

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

KT-SVT-002  
CS 3509  
Noyes Roadside Parking Area

<b>Historic Name Other Name</b>	Noyes Roadside Parking Area	<b>CS # SHPO Inv #</b>	3509 KT-SVT-002
<b>Location</b>	E side of TH 75 at Canadian border	<b>Hwy District Reference</b>	TH 75 2B 412
<b>City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM</b>	St. Vincent Township Kittson 164N 51W Sec 25 Pembina, ND-MN Z14 E630240 N5428800	<b>Acres Rest Area Class</b>	2.3 4
<b>Designer</b>	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	<b>SP #</b>	75-6-39-2 3510
<b>Builder</b>	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	
<b>Historic Use Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	014750.02-07
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1937	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Ols 4.220 Ols 4.221
<b>Overall Site Integrity</b>	Intact/Slightly Altered		
<b>Review Required</b>	Yes		
<b>National Register Status</b>	Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
<b>Historic Context</b>	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		

**List of Standing Structures**

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Marker	Ca. 1929	04-20-03
02	Flagpole, Stone	1937	
03	Bench(es), Stone	1937	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			<b>Prep by</b> Gemini Research May. 04 G1. 114
			<b>Prep for</b> Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit

<b>Final Report</b>	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minn Trunk Hwys (1998) <b>Addendum</b>
---------------------	--

■ BRIEF

The Noyes Roadside Parking Area is a 2.3-acre wayside rest located on the eastern side of T.H. 75 at the U.S.-Canada international border. It is located directly across T.H. 75 from the U.S. Border Station. Both the wayside rest and the border station are within the unincorporated village of Noyes, St. Vincent Township, Kittson County.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Note: due to post-Sept. 11, 2001, changes in national border security, Gemini Research was allowed only an abbreviated field visit in April 2003 because of site's proximity to the border and the border station. As a consequence, the site was not thoroughly examined and very few notes and photographs were taken.

**Stone Obelisk Marker.** Erected circa 1929. A granite marker in the shape of an obelisk stands just east of the eastern edge of the T.H. 75 pavement near the northern edge of the site very close to the actual international boundary line. Fieldworkers were not allowed to approach the marker during April 2003 fieldwork, but it appeared from a distance to be intact. Circa 1952 MHD photos of the obelisk indicate that there is incised lettering on its four faces that reads: "International Boundary," "United States," "Canada," and "Treaty 1825, No. 833-8, 1929" (Olson vol. 4, pg. 221). (Note: There is apparently another stone marker just over the border on the Canadian side. It is a headstone-like granite marker with a rectangular inset bronze plaque. The marker is pictured in a circa 1952 MHD photo (Olson vol. 4, pg. 220, top photo). Fieldworkers were not allowed to look for it in April 2003.)

**Flagpole and Flagpole Plaza.** Erected 1937 by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD). The focal point of the wayside rest is a monumental stone flagpole base that stands on an elaborate plaza. The flagpole base is 8' tall and about 4'6" square. It is built of randomly-laid mortared split fieldstone. The flagpole base has a stone rubble core, according to original plans. The flagpole base stands on a 10'6"-square platform of flagstone. The current metal flagpole may be the original pole, which was specified on the original plans to be 32' tall.

The flagpole base stands at the center of a plaza. On the original plans, the plaza was to contain several expanding concentric shapes: the flagpole base, its flagstone platform, a 28'-diameter area (an elaborated circle) around the flagstone platform that was also surfaced with flagstone, a gravel walk around the elaborated circle, a grass border around the gravel walk, and a clipped honeysuckle hedge around the grass border. The plans specify that three stone and concrete benches were to rest near the outer edges of the gravel walk, within the clipped hedge. Limited historic photos suggest that the site was built fairly close to these plans.

In 1997 the gravel walk around the flagstone area was planted with grass and four concrete sidewalks that divide the grass area into quarters were added. A circular poured concrete walkway that encircles the grass area was also added.

**Three Benches.** Built 1937 by the Minnesota Department of Highways. Standing on the flagstone plaza are three 6'-long benches that have poured concrete seats resting on 12"-tall mortared fieldstone pedestals. The benches appear to conform to those drawn on the original plans, which specify that the benches should have 6'x 2' seats of reinforced poured concrete "with rounded edges," and legs of "stone masonry, ledge rock or split faced field stone."

***Metal Interpretive Marker.*** Erected 1997 by Mn/DOT. This marker is located southeast of the flagstone plaza. A rectangular metal frame supports a plastic sign board with a different text message on each of two sides. Entitled "Our Native Prairie," the texts address the natural history of the prairie. (See a copy of the text in this inventory file.) The marker stands on an octagonal poured concrete pad that is accessed via a poured concrete walkway.

#### ■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The Noyes Roadside Parking Area is a triangular site. According to the original plans, the northern edge of the rest area property was situated on or near the international boundary line. The plans specify a 10'-wide clear strip along the international line to allow for border patrols.

Landscape architect A. R. Nichols situated the site's principal built structures -- the flagpole plaza, the parking area, and the traffic island -- so that they were aligned with the 1931 border station building on the opposite side of the highway in a to form a balanced composition. (See original plans.) The wayside rest's clipped hedges (an important component of its landscape design) were likely chosen by Nichols to make the site visually compatible with the border station, which original plans indicate was surrounded by an "existing hedge."

The shallow parking area drawn on the original plans was in front of the flagpole plaza. It was to be edged with concrete curbing. Today there is no defined parking area at the site. Instead, a concrete curb defines the edge of the roadway, with the intention that cars park parallel along the curb.

The traffic island specified on the original plans was shaped like an ellipse with one side flattened. The island was to be surrounded by a concrete curb. Today there is no island in the middle of T.H. 75, but instead a small, narrow island is located near the border station's central front canopy.

#### **Vegetation**

The original planting plan specifies vegetation chosen for hardiness and winter interest, especially important given the length of winter at this northerly site.

The planting plan specifies that shrubs and trees be planted along the northern and eastern sides of the triangular site to provide shelter and to screen "objectionable views." The shrubs include two rows of Sweet Mockorange (*Philadelphus coronarius*) (100 plants per row), and a long screen comprised of 100 Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), 120 Tartarian Maple (*Acer tartaricum*), and 100 Siberian Pea Tree (*Caragana arborescens*). Trees planted throughout the site for shelter and shade include 80 Colorado Green Spruce (*Picea pungens*), 13 American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), and 40 Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra italica*) planted in groups of 6, 15, and 19. In addition to screening, the 80 spruce also serve as a backdrop to the flagstone plaza.

The plan specifies that the site's focal point, the flagstone plaza, be surrounded by a clipped hedge of Morrow Honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowi*). The honeysuckle hedge also defined the eastern side of the site's shallow parking area. A total of 450 honeysuckle plants were specified. The two front corners of the flagstone plaza were to be marked by two groups of 10 Mugho Pine (*Pinus montana mugho*). The front corners of the parking area were to be marked by two groups of Pfitzer Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis pfitzeriana*) and Mugho Pine, with 9 juniper and 10 pine in each group.

The planting plan also specifies a group of 14 Pfitzer Juniper on the traffic island between northbound and southbound T.H. 75. The entire wayside rest was to be seeded with turf groundcovers, namely Kentucky Blue Grass, Red Top, White Clover, and Domestic Rye Grass.

A circa 1952 MHD photo suggests that the site was planted as specified (Olson vol. 4, pg. 220). The photo shows a 15-year-old landscape with almost lush vegetation near the flagpole plaza. The photo shows the clipped hedges surrounding the plaza and edging the parking area, the mugho pines at the front corners of the plaza, and many spruce and deciduous trees and shrubs.

Sometime between 1980 and 1996 the honeysuckle hedge (or remaining parts thereof) was removed.

In 1997 Mn/DOT reseeded much of the grass and planted 10 Black Hills Spruce (*Picea glauca densata*) in the southeastern portion of the site. Around the flagpole, Mn/DOT planted four groups of seven Prince of Wales Juniper (*Juniperus horitontalis* 'Prince of Wales'). 80 Froebel Spirea (*Spirea x bumalda* 'Froebelii') shrubs were planted to replace part of the original honeysuckle hedge that surrounded the flagpole plaza. Eight Pink Spire Crabapples (*Malus* 'Pink Spires') were planted northwest of the plaza, and seven were planted southeast of the plaza. Ten Dart's Gold Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Dart's Gold') shrubs were planted near the newly-installed metal interpretive marker.

Because of abbreviated fieldwork (see note at the top of this document), existing plantings were not reviewed. Fieldworkers noted that, in general, the original design intent seems preserved, with mature spruce sheltering the flagpole area, and deciduous trees and shrubs screening and sheltering the site's northern and eastern boundaries and providing general shade and shelter throughout the site. Much of the site was covered with mowed turf. The plantings installed in 1997 appear to be extant.

## ■ SETTING

The site is located on the international border within the small village of Noyes. Noyes is surrounded by a largely agricultural area. In general, the site is surrounded by Canadian farmland to the north, U.S. farmland to the east, the U.S. Border Station to the west, and residences to the southwest and southeast.

## ■ INTEGRITY

### Alterations

The site's original parking area and traffic island have been removed. The gravel area around the flagstone plaza has been replaced with grass and four poured concrete walks. The honeysuckle hedge has been removed and part of it replaced by a spirea hedge. Some original coniferous and deciduous trees have been lost. In 1997 some new trees were installed, largely in sympathy with the original design intent. An interpretive marker and a concrete walkway leading to the marker were installed in 1997.

### Notes on Condition

The structures and vegetation are in fair condition.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In circa 1929, prior to the construction of the Noyes Roadside Parking Area, a granite marker in the shape of an obelisk was apparently erected at the border. No further information on this marker is currently available. (See Standing Structures above.)

The Noyes Roadside Parking Area was constructed in 1937 by the Roadside Development Division of the Minnesota Department of Highways. The 692'-long project was designed to create a small wayside rest directly across T.H. 75 from the U.S. border station. The wayside rest was undoubtedly designed to encourage and support early auto tourism, to welcome Canadian visitors, and to provide a resting point for motorists who were crossing the border. At the time the wayside rest was built, the border station building was only six years old, having been built in 1931. The same building exists today.

The roadside parking area was developed as part of a larger highway project in which about 19 miles of T.H. 75 were paved. T.H. 75 was a gravel road at the time. Within Noyes, the highway was widened to six lanes between the customs station and the proposed wayside rest. The three miles leading southward from the Canadian border were paved with concrete, while the next 16 miles (to a point one mile north of the town of Hallock) were paved with bituminous.

The T.H. 75 improvements were built during the 1937 and 1938 construction seasons. The wayside rest was apparently built in 1937.

The T.H. 75 project had been supported by several northern communities who lobbied for the improvements. For example, in May 1936 while planning was underway, representatives from northern Minnesota towns including Crookston, Hallock, and Warren, as well as nearby Canadian communities met to discuss signage and methods of "securing traffic" for T.H. 75. Proponents hoped to entice tourists to travel T.H. 75 and to encourage travelers to cross the Canadian border within Minnesota, rather than using a North Dakota highway located a few miles to the west. Highway improvements on the Minnesota side were met with improvements on the Canadian side including the paving of the highway from Winnipeg to the border.

In June of 1937, the proposed roadside park -- which would be Noyes' only park -- was described to the public by the *Kittson County Enterprise*:

Noyes to Have Beautiful Park

Efforts of beautification sponsored by the Minnesota State Highway Commission, will soon be appreciably recognized at Noyes, Minn., where work is steadily progressing on what will perhaps be the most attractive park in the northwest corner of the county. An asset to Highway 75 and its tourists will be this triangular formed garden of nature, now taking shape on the left side of the highway, upon entering Noyes from the north. A rare sight to greet tourist Canadians.

The land, a donation to a worthy cause by Mr. McKay of Noyes, is receiving the hands of experts in tree and shrubbery planting. Beautiful elms, spruce and many other lovely plantings numbering 2,000 individual sets, will make their home in the rich soil. Ideal walks and an inscribed monument will form a border for the numerous flowerbeds. We urge you to make a visit to this lovely park, that symbolizes America's welcome to Canadians ("Noyes To Have" 1937).

The park was designed by A. R. Nichols, the Roadside Development Division's Consulting Landscape Architect. As befitting the importance of a site on an international boundary, Nichols' design for the

Noyes site is among the most formal of his MHD wayside rests. The original plans even include a drawing of an elegantly dressed man and woman standing near the flagpole (Sheet 5 of 5).

Plans for the roadside parking area were presumably drawn in 1935 or 1936. Among the signatories on the plan's cover sheet is Harold E. Olson, head of the MHD Roadside Development Division. The plans were approved May 4, 1936.

The T.H. 75 highway project was apparently built mostly by private contractors. Federal dollars probably helped fund the highway project, but there is no direct evidence of Depression-relief labor being used. If built in another part of the state, the accompanying wayside rest would probably have been built using unemployed workers under a New Deal federal relief program such as the WPA. There is no evidence, however, that federal relief workers were used for the Noyes Roadside Parking Area. It is possible that, because of low population in this remote rural area, there were too few unemployed workers available. (During the Depression the MHD Roadside Development Division encountered this situation in some rural areas where there were not enough unemployed workers to use federal relief labor on construction projects.)

Details of the proposed highway work were reported in the *Kittson County Enterprise* in September of 1937. The article stated in part,

The paving will start at a point where the international boundary line intersects the highway, which is a few yards beyond the customs and immigration buildings. From this point east and south three miles of concrete will be laid and from the point of the beginning of the concrete for a distance of 400 feet the pavement will be six lanes wide with a parked boulevard dividing each three tier section, making in all a total width of 83 feet. Throughout the length of this 400 foot stretch of wide paving the intersection will be provided with trees and flowers, beautifully set off with concrete curbing ("Highway Dep't." 1937).

The *Enterprise* article concluded, "When the concrete is completed at Noyes, an excellent road bed will present itself to thousands of tourists who have for years been patronizing the Dakota highway on the other side of the Red River" ("Highway Dep't." 1937).

The highway project at Noyes was completed in July of 1938, with the *Enterprise* commenting: "The new highway is a beautiful auto road and a great improvement to Noyes. Canadians entering the U.S. at Noyes should get a good impression of neighboring country if a good road creates a good impression" (*Kittson County Enterprise*, July 13, 1938).

The Noyes work was completed about the same time that *The WPA Guide to Minnesota* was published in 1938. The *Guide* wrote about Noyes,

Noyes is a small village and a United States port of entry, with an almost cosmopolitan air of bustle and excitement emanating from the U.S. Customs and Immigration Offices. The American and Canadian flags flying not far apart, the trim uniforms of the officials, and the constant commotion usual to international boundaries contrast with the quiet of this remote north-woods country. A large force of railroad officials is necessary to take care of incoming and outgoing passengers and freight on both the Soo Line and the Great Northern Railway passing through Noyes (*WPA Guide* 1938/1985:335).

Mn/DOT Site Development Unit files indicate that in 1961 the wayside rest had an entrance and approach marker, a parking area, a pump or well for drinking water, three tables, three picnic fireplaces, one refuse container, a flagpole, and an informational marker highway.

In the 1980s Mn/DOT apparently drew plans to rehabilitate the site that were not implemented (S.P. 3709-17).

The site was rehabilitated in 1997 by Mn/DOT (S.P. 8809-198). The project included cleaning and repairing the stonework, installing some new vegetation, and adding a metal interpretive marker.

#### ■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

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

#### ■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Noyes Roadside Parking Area was built in 1937 by the Minnesota Department of Highways. This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the property 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 Noyes Roadside Parking Area is among a group of sites statewide, most dating from the Depression, that represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in Minnesota. These properties date from the formative years of the Roadside Development Division, and represent the state highway department's efforts to serve the steadily increasing number of motorists using Minnesota's new trunk highway system. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. The Noyes Roadside Parking Area is an important example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols, who served as Consulting Landscape Architect for the Roadside Development Division during its early years. The Noyes site is an example of the most formal of Nichols' designs for the MHD. (National Register Criterion C.)

The property may also be associated with the "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic context.

#### ■ OTHER COMMENTS

T.H. 75 is sometimes busy past the site.

Because of current U.S. security concerns at international border crossings, visitors are no longer allowed to stop at the wayside rest, to stop on the highway shoulders near the site, or to take photographs in the vicinity.

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

About 2.4 miles south of the Noyes Roadside Parking Area is a stone state line marker that was built by Mn/DOT circa 1988. In 1997 its hanging wooden sign board was replaced and plantings were installed nearby.

■ REFERENCES

"Border Crossing Data." Bureau of Transportation Statistics. [http://www.bts.gov/programs/itt/cross/pv\\_al.htm](http://www.bts.gov/programs/itt/cross/pv_al.htm). Retrieved 2003. Copy in Mn/DOT Site Development Unit inventory file for Noyes Roadside Parking Area.

"Bouvette Promised Oiling and Paving." *Kittson County Enterprise*, March 10, 1937.

Construction Plans for S.P. 3510 (T.H. 756). 5 sheets. Appr. May 4, 1936 by J. F. Ellison. Minnesota Department of Highways. St. Paul.

"County Road Improvement Includes Paving." *Kittson County Enterprise*, July 6, 1938.

Granger, Susan, Scott Kelly, and Kay Grossman. *Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*. Prepared for Mn/DOT. Dec. 1998.

"Highway Dep't. Prepares To Pave 3 Miles At Noyes." *Kittson County Enterprise*, Sept. 8, 1937.

"Highway 75 Meeting Held at Emerson." *Kittson County Enterprise*, May 27, 1936.

*Kittson County Enterprise*, untitled items in regular "Local News" column, June 30, 1937; Aug 4, 1937; Sept. 1, 1937; Oct. 27, 1937; July 13, 1938; Aug. 3, 1938; and Aug. 10, 1938.

Kuster, Robert [Chief Inspector, Pembina Service Port Office, Pembina, ND]. Telephone interview with Kay Grossman. April 4, 2003.

Larson, Curt [MnDOT Area Supervisor, Dist. 2B]. Telephone interview with Kay Grossman. Dec. 30, 2002.

"Noyes To Get 3 Miles of Paving." *Kittson County Enterprise*, Aug. 18, 1937.

"Noyes To Have Beautiful Park." *Kittson County Enterprise*, June 30, 1937.

Olson, Harold E., comp. *Historical Markers in Minnesota*. Vol. 4. Photo album prepared by Department of Roadside Development, Minnesota Department of Highways, circa 1942, updated circa 1954. Mn/DOT Site Development Unit. St. Paul.

"United States Border Patrol History." <http://pruden.net/usbp.htm>. Retrieved 2003. Copy in Mn/DOT Site Development Unit inventory file for Noyes Roadside Parking Area.

Upham, Warren. *Minnesota Geographic Names*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1969.

*The WPA Guide to Minnesota*. Minnesota Work Projects Administration Federal Writers' Program. 1938. Rpt. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1985.



■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Noyes**

The St. Paul and Pacific Railway (later called the Great Northern) built a line through this portion of Kittson County in 1878-1879. The line met the Canadian Pacific Railway near present-day Noyes and thus linked Minnesota railroads with lucrative markets in Winnipeg and other Canadian cities. The village of Noyes did not yet exist, and the U.S. customs office and the St. Paul and Pacific depot were located in the nearby town of St. Vincent.

A competing railroad company, the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Sault Ste. Marie, constructed a line to the international border at present-day Noyes in 1904. The village of Noyes was then established in 1905. In 1905 the U.S. customs office was moved from St. Vincent to Noyes. (The village, in fact, was named for J. A. Noyes, a U.S. customs official.) The village of Noyes remained small. A post office was established in 1927. Noyes was platted Nov. 15, 1933, but has never been incorporated. Noyes has a current population of about 65 people.

**U.S. Customs House**

The border crossing station at Noyes was established in 1905, after having been previously located in the nearby town of St. Vincent. During the first three decades, most of the customs business at Noyes pertained to railroad rather than highway traffic. In fact, between 1905 and 1931 the Noyes customs office was located in the Great Northern depot. The current red brick customs building was built in 1931. (It is 12,800 sq. ft. and was designed by James A. Wetmore of the U.S. Treasury.)

The U.S. Border Patrol was established by Congress in 1924. There are 21 sectors that the U.S. Border Patrol oversees. Noyes is located in the Grand Forks sector. The Canada-U.S. border is 3,987 miles long, stretching from Point Roberts, Washington, to Maine. In Minnesota, the Canada-U.S. border is 547 miles long, beginning at the northwestern corner of Minnesota near Noyes and reaching to Thunder Bay, located at the northeastern tip of the state.

According to border crossing data for 1997 (the most recent available), the Noyes station had 32,000 incoming personal vehicle crossings during that year. The highest crossing area for personal vehicles in Minnesota was International Falls, with 419,029 crossings in 1997 ("Border Crossing Data").