

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

LW-BDC-030  
CS 3905  
Baudette Rest Area

<b>Historic Name</b>	Baudette Rest Area	<b>CS #</b>	3905
<b>Other Name</b>	Peace Park	<b>SHPO Inv #</b>	LW-BDC-030
<b>Location</b>	SE side of TH 72 at the Rainy River	<b>Hwy</b>	TH 72
<b>City/Township</b>	Baudette, City of	<b>District</b>	2A
<b>County</b>	Lake of the Woods	<b>Reference</b>	130
<b>Twp Rng Sec</b>	161N 31W Sec 35	<b>Acres</b>	6.1
<b>USGS Quad</b>	Baudette	<b>Rest Area Class</b>	1
<b>UTM</b>	Z15 E382720 N5396980	<b>SP #</b>	3905-05
<b>Designer</b>	Toltz King Duvall Anderson Assoc	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	
<b>Builder</b>	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	013509.00-22
<b>Historic Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	
<b>Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area		
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1969		
<b>Overall Site Integrity</b>	Intact/Slightly Altered		
<b>Review Required</b>	Yes		
<b>National Register Status</b>	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
<b>Historic Context</b>			

**List of Standing Structures**

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Gravestone	1904	08-16-96
02	Gravestone	1907	
03	Marker	1966	
04	Marker	1966	
05	Restroom Bldg	1969	
06	Picnic Table(s), Other	1969	
07	Drinking Fountain(s)	1969	
08	Storage Bldg	Ca. 1980	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			
<b>Prep by</b>			Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1.4
<b>Prep for</b>			Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit

<b>Final Report</b>	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)
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■ BRIEF

Baudette Rest Area, also known as Peace Park, is a 6.1-acre site that is located on the eastern side of T.H. 72 at the Rainy River. It is located within the northern limits of the City of Baudette, near the Canadian border.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Gravestones.** Cemetery established 1894, Stones erected 1904 and 1907. The Old Town Cemetery is located on the rest area property approximately 30' from the asphalt parking area near the northeastern edge of the rest area. Two gravestones dating from the early 20th century are located near the three concrete picnic tables next to the asphalt parking area. The two gravestones are located in a grassy area with no fence or other markings. One gravestone is a pedestal approximately 4' tall that reads: "Annie Swenson Sept. 28, 1872 Mar. 23, 1907 She sleeps in the valley so sweet but her spirit has taken its flight. O her form is but dust 'neath our feet while she's an angel of light." The other is a low stone marker that reads: "Dudley Bayley, 1898-1904." The graveyard is shown as a 70' by 45' area on a 1972 Mn/DOT plan.

**Two Metal Historical Markers.** Erected 1966 by MHS. Two black metal markers with gold lettering are located within 30' of each other in a grass and tree-planted area outside the northwestern perimeter of the loop drive, on the eastern side of T.H. 72. They were erected in 1966, one by the Minnesota Historical Society and one by the Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission (in cooperation with MHS). The texts of the markers address the Great Fire of 1910 and Massacre Island. (See texts at the end of this document.)

**Restroom Building.** Erected 1969 by Mn/DOT. Designed by Toltz, King, Duvall, Anderson and Assoc. The 1,223 sq. ft., concrete block restroom building is faced with red brick and has a flat roof. Entrances are located on the eastern and western facades of the building. A concrete walkway approaches the building from the northeastern edge of the asphalt loop drive.

**Drinking Fountain.** Erected 1969 by Mn/DOT. Designed by Toltz, King, Duvall, Anderson and Assoc. A small square brick-faced drinking fountain is located in front of the restroom building. Its overall dimensions are about 5' by 5' and it is about 3' tall.

**Concrete Picnic Tables.** Erected 1969 by Mn/DOT. There are 9 round, precast concrete picnic tables at the site. Each table is fastened to a circular concrete pad measuring approximately 12' in diameter. Three tables are located within 20' of two gravestones.

**Storage Building.** Erected circa 1980 by Mn/DOT. A 14' by 18' storage building is located at the northern edge of Peace Park.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The approximately 6.1-acre wayside rest is approached from Highway 72 by a two-lane asphalt roadway, approximately 150' in length. The wayside rest is an oval site with a one-way asphalt loop drive (about 25' wide) that surrounds a large grassy and tree-planted island.

Within the island are a brick-faced restroom building, concrete sidewalks, round concrete picnic tables, and two asphalt parking areas each measuring approximately 20' by 100'. Round concrete picnic tables, two historic markers, and two gravestones are located along the outside of the loop drive. The gravestones are located within 20' of the three concrete picnic tables on the northeastern side of the loop drive. Additional parking areas of recent vintage are located on the southern edge of the wayside rest near Baudette Bay and at the northeastern edge of the rest area near the gravestones.

The site has a well-maintained appearance, with the grassy areas neatly manicured. A number of mature evergreens, junipers, and ash trees are scattered throughout the site. Approximately 56 Black Hills Spruce, 55 Green Ash trees, and 95 Andorra Junipers were planted here in 1969. The grassy island is planted primarily with deciduous trees and a few evergreens. The area near the Baudette River is planted mainly with evergreens, as is the perimeter near T.H. 72. The terrain is generally flat, with gently rolling hills to the east near the Baudette River and to the south near Baudette Bay.

#### ■ **SETTING**

The rest area is bounded on the east by the Baudette River that empties into the Rainy River at this point. Baudette Bay is located south of the park. T.H. 72 bounds the park on the north and west. North of the park is the International Bridge (constructed circa 1960) that spans the Rainy River, which separates Canada from the United States. Also located to the north on T.H. 72, within sight of the park, is a Canadian-U.S. border station. Looking to the east across the Baudette River is a residential development. The view to the south includes Baudette Bay and, across the bay to the southeast, a forest.

#### ■ **INTEGRITY**

##### **Alterations**

The site appears to have been built close to plan.

A parking area was added circa 1994.

In general, the site retains its 1969 integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

##### **Notes on Condition**

The grassy areas appear to be well maintained. The gravestones are in fair condition. The other standing structures are in good condition.

#### ■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

This rest area contains portions of the Old Town Cemetery. This cemetery was established in 1894 on one-half acre of railroad-owned property. In 1909 the City relocated the cemetery to the Elm Park Cemetery, which had been established south of Baudette, about 1.5 miles south of this rest area. Permission was received from relatives of those buried in the Old

Town Cemetery before relocating the gravestones. Apparently those still buried at this site had no surviving relatives to grant permission for the relocation. The remaining graves and gravestones are maintained by the City of Baudette.

Prior to the development of this rest area, the Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission (at its March 1964 meeting) approved the erection of an historic marker to be placed in Baudette commemorating Massacre Island. This marker was not erected until 1966. The Minnesota Historical Society also erected a marker here in 1966 commemorating the Great Fire of 1910.

The Baudette Rest Area was developed in 1969 as part of the Federal Highway Beautification program. It was designed by Toltz, King, Duvall, Anderson and Assoc. of St. Paul, and was opened to the public in June 1970.

#### **■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

#### **■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Baudette Rest Area, built in 1969, is one of several rest areas on current Mn/DOT right-of-way that were developed or improved by the MHD during the late 1960s as part of a program supported by Federal Highway Beautification funds.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the Baudette Rest Area is NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it does not meet the context's registration requirements. The remnants of Old Town Cemetery themselves do not meet National Register eligibility criteria, which state that a cemetery is not eligible for the National Register unless it "derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from [extraordinary] age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events."

#### **■ OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

Although T.H. 72 is fairly busy past this site, the noise and traffic do not detract from the atmosphere.

It may be possible that there are other, unmarked graves on the site. It is recommended that the graves are interpreted for the public and perhaps set off by fencing.

It is recommended that the text of the Massacre Island Marker be updated for cultural sensitivity.

The text of the two historic markers is associated with the general area. They are not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ **REFERENCES**

Hirst, Marlys. "A Documentation of Lake of the Woods County Cemeteries." Lake of the Woods Historical Society. 1990.

Minutes of Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission, March 13, 1964. Mathilde Rice Elliot Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

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

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MARKER TEXTS**

Baudette was incorporated as a village in 1906. The town was named after the Baudette River, which was named for a French fur trader.

One of the two historic markers addresses the Great Fire of 1910. The year 1910 was the driest of any years in Minnesota on record [in 1969]. There were more than 900 forest fires in 395 townships in 29 counties that year. The most destructive was the fire that, on October 7, swept over the villages of Baudette and Spooner (Baudette's sister village, now called East Baudette) on the Rainy River in Lake of the Woods County. Twenty-nine persons died in the fire and damage amounted to a million dollars. There is a mass grave in the city cemetery 1.5 miles south of this rest area.

**Text of the Massacre Island Marker**

"Massacre Island"

"Tradition is woven of fact and fiction. Two islands in the Lake of the Woods are named 'Massacre,' one on the Canadian, one on the American side of the boundary. The Canadian island, the larger of the two, is heavily wooded. The American island is small, rocky and barren. These islands were so named because of the following events.

"In 1732, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Verendrye, French-Canadian explorer and trader, built Fort St. Charles at Northwest Angle Inlet on Lake of the Woods. From this base he traded with the Cree and Assiniboine for furs to finance explorations for a passage to the Western Sea.

"Early in June, 1736, La Verendrye sent his son, Jean-Baptiste, with the priest, Father Pierre Aulneau, and nineteen voyageurs eastward for supplies. At their first campsite, a small rocky island 'seven leagues' from the Fort, they were attacked and killed by a Sioux war party. The bodies were decapitated and placed in a row. The heads of the voyageurs were wrapped in beaver pelts and left near the bodies. Those of Jean-Baptiste and Father Aulneau may have been carried off as trophies.

"Several weeks after the massacre, a party of Chippewa passed a small island and discovered the victims of the massacre. Out of reverence for the priest, and because they could not dig a grave on the rocky island, they raised a stone cairn over his body.

"When he learned of the tragedy, the elder La Verendrye had the remains of the men taken to Fort St. Charles and buried near the chapel. They were found there in 1908 by an archaeological party from St. Boniface College, Manitoba, Canada.

"The island where the massacre occurred has never been satisfactorily identified.

"Erected by the Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission, 1966"

**Text of the Great Fire Marker**

"Great Fire of 1910"

"Northern Minnesota forests were tinder dry during the fall of 1910. Marshes and streams shriveled. Small fires smoldered here and there in the peat bogs and underbrush.

"On October 4 a forest fire consumed the communities of Williams, Cedar Spur, and Graceton. The flames, fed by loggers' slashings, crackled onward and three days later completely destroyed all the buildings in the little town of Pitt except the depot.

"The fire approached Baudette and Spooner on the evening of October 7. As the towns rapidly became furnaces of flames, citizens gathered at the depot for safety. Victims of a typhoid epidemic were evacuated by train before a whirlwind of flame swept away the two towns and the bridge over the Baudette River that connected them.

"Before morning almost everything at Baudette was leveled, leaving what one survivor called 'a desolate plain' covered by charred ruins. Only the sawmill at Spooner remained standing.

"Forty-two persons lost their lives in the great fire of 1910. About 300,000 acres were burned in ten townships, including much valuable timber and many homesteads and livestock.

"Erected by the Minnesota Historical Society 1966"