MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES INVENTORY

ML-KAN-005
CS 4814
Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355)

Historic Name	Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355)
Other Name	

CS #	4814
SHPO Inv #	ML-KAN-005

Location	TH 169 300' N of CSAH 25
City/Township	Kathio Township
County	Mille Lacs
Twp Rng Sec	43N 27W Sec 7
USGS Quad	Vineland
UTM	Z15 E438860 N5118080

Hwy	TH 169
District	3A
Reference	227.7

Acres	
Rest Area Class	NA

SP #	169-18-23-4 1804-08

Designer	Skooglun, H O, Natl Park Serv Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch
Builder	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

SHPO Review #	

Historic Use	Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam
Present Use	Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam

MHS Photo #	013535.20-24

Yr of Landscape Design	1939
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered
Review Required	Yes

MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Nic 1.21

National Register Status	Eligible, see Statement of Significance

Historic Context	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960 Reinforced Concrete Highway Bridges, 1900-1945

List of Standing Structures

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	
01	Bridge/Culvert	1939	

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

Fieldwork Date
08-03-97

Prep by
Gemini Research
Dec. 98 G1. 94

Prep for
Site Development Unit
Cultural Resources Unit
Environmental Studies Unit

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

■ BRIEF

The Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355) is a concrete slab, granite-faced bridge that carries T.H. 169 over Whitefish Creek at Wigwam Bay on the western shore of Mille Lacs Lake. The bridge is located about 300' north of CSAH 25 in Mille Lacs County's Kathio Township.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Bridge. Built 1939 by the CCC. Designed by H. O. Skooglun of the National Park Service. Bridge 3355 is a concrete slab span bridge with granite headwalls that carries T.H. 169 over Whitefish Creek. The bridge was designed to incorporate a smaller, pre-existing concrete slab span bridge (with a 16' span) that had been built in 1921. The new bridge was constructed when T.H. 169 was widened to a divided highway. The structure is approximately 80' long and 76' wide and was originally designed to support a roadway with two 27'-wide lanes separated by a 6'-wide median. It has headwalls and railings built of gray, random ashlar, roughly-cut (or lightly rockfaced) Isle granite. The bridge has a 16'-wide span with a stone and concrete substructure. The headwalls are stepped both in height and width and have a flat granite arch that is supported by brackets. The headwalls have simple, 21"-wide, stone railings. Inside the railings are 4'-wide granite flagstone sidewalks that are lined with granite curbs. (The curb faces were originally about 8" according to the original plans.) The bridge's design emphasizes the strength and beauty of the granite masonry through simple shapes and lines. Metal guardrails (each about 150' long) have been added to the ends of each railing.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The bridge is located just a few feet west of the shore of Mille Lacs.

No original planting plan has been located. The bridge plans indicate natural trees nearby -- perhaps there were no additional plantings. The topography of the site is basically flat.

■ SETTING

Whitefish Creek links Whitefish Lake (located about one-third mile west of the bridge) with Mille Lacs. The creek flows under T.H. 169 and into Mille Lacs. The bridge is surrounded by Mille Lacs Lake on the east; the T.H. 169 right-of-way, the lakeshore, and resort and cabin properties on the north and south; and a forest and wetlands area to the west.

■ INTEGRITY

Alterations

The bridge appears to have been built closely to the original plan.

The structure is basically intact. The roadway pavement thickness has apparently increased through the years so that only about 3" of the original 8" curb face is currently exposed above the gravel shoulder. A thin veneer of concrete has been added to the top of the

railings. Metal guardrails have been added to the ends of each railing. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The bridge appears to be in fair condition. A thin veneer of concrete has been added to the top of the railings. The bridge and its sidewalk are overgrown with weeds and brush.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355) 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 bridge was built by the enrollees of a CCC camp that was established in 1935 on the southern edge of Garrison. The camp was sponsored by the Department of Highways, supervised by the National Park Service, and operated by the U.S. Army.

Bridge 3355 was designed to incorporate a small, pre-existing concrete slab bridge that was built in 1921. The expansion of Bridge 3355 allowed for a 60'-wide roadway and two sidewalks. The bridge had been completed by November of 1939, according to a dated historic photo. T.H. 169 over Whitefish Creek was widened as part of a large T.H. 169 and T.H. 18 improvement project directed by the highway department's Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan.

The bridge plans were signed in January of 1939. A "General Note" on the plans describes the work: "The existing reinforced concrete bridge which was constructed by the Minnesota Highway Department is to be extended on both sides because of the change in the present highway to two lanes with island. The extensions to match up with the present structure . . ." The bridge plan is signed 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 bridge plan includes the statements "Designed by H. O. Skooglun" and "Drawn by H. O. Skooglun." Skooglun apparently worked within the National Park Service's Minnesota Central Design Office in St. Paul, under the supervision of Edward W. Barber who was chief architect and major designer for the Park Service. 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 Kenney Lake Overlook -- all a few miles from Whitefish Creek (all are included in this inventory). Also participating in the design of the project was Arthur R. Nichols who was Consulting Landscape Architect for the Minnesota Department of Highways in the 1930s. Nichols participated in the design of all of the CCC-built roadside development improvements near Garrison.

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

The Whitefish Creek Bridge 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.

The bridge 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 standing structure projects 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).

The 1938 *Annual Report* of the highway department's Roadside Development Division summarized work completed that year in the Mille Lacs Lake area:

> The construction work on a large masonry concourse overlooking Mille Lacs Lake was begun in 1936 and continued through 1937 and 1938. In addition, some major changes in alignment and design of the roadway have been made, together with the construction of several large drainage structures which were provided with rustic stone headwalls [see Garrison Creek Culvert, Whitefish Creek Bridge, T.H. 169 Culvert at St. Alban's Bay, and Garrison Pedestrian Underpass (Bridge 5265)]. Grading operations are now in progress, extending from Garrison to 1 1/2 miles south and consist of a divided roadway of two 30 foot lanes with an island of 6 to 90 feet between (*Annual Report* 1938:19).

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 Department of Conservation's 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 highway improvements 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 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):

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, except that the bridge was determined to be eligible for the National Register by the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory. (See Statement of Significance below.)

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Whitefish Creek Bridge (Bridge 3355), built in 1939 by the CCC, is one of seven bridges recorded in this inventory that are faced with stone. It is one of 14 sites in the inventory known, or suspected, to have been built by the CCC. The bridge 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 Whitefish Creek Bridge 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 Whitefish Creek Bridge 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. Whitefish Creek 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 bridge 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 (four of which are bridges) 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. The Whitefish Creek Bridge is an excellent example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to small highway bridge. It has stonework of excellent quality. 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 Whitefish Creek Bridge was also determined to be ELIGIBLE for the National Register by the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory. The bridge inventory states:

As one of Minnesota's rare examples of an ornamental concrete-slab bridge, Bridge No. 3355 is eligible for the National Register for its design under Criterion C, within the historic context "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota, 1900-1945." The Multiple Property Documentation Form associated with this context states, in Registration Criterion 5, that a concrete highway bridge may be eligible under Criterion C if it displays notable aesthetics. With its elaborate, well-executed, ornamental stonework, Bridge 3355 fulfills this criterion (Hess 1997).

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. 169 over this bridge is very busy during the summer months.

■ 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.

Hess, Jeffrey A. Minnesota Historic Bridge Inventory Form for Bridge 3355. Hess-Roise and Co. for Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Study. 1997.

"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.

Thiel, George A. and Carl E. Dutton. *The Architectural, Structural, and Monumental Stones of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1935.

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mille Lacs is the state's second-largest lake in square area and has approximately 150 miles of shoreline. T.H. 169 follows the 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.

Whitefish Lake was called Ga-atikumegokag, "the place of white fish," by the Ojibwe. Whitefish Creek links Whitefish Lake (located about one-third mile west of the bridge) with Mille Lacs. The creek flows into Mille Lacs, under T.H. 169, at the western shore of the lake.

Local Stone

The granite used to construct the bridge was probably obtained from a quarry near Isle, a community located on the southeastern shore of Mille Lacs Lake. 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 from the site was called Isle Granite and was marketed under the name of Cold Spring Pearl White granite.