

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

PN-PLK-006
CS 5808

Big Pine Lake Roadside Parking Area

Historic Name Other Name	Big Pine Lake Roadside Parking Area	CS # SHPO Inv #	5808 PN-PLK-006
Location	SW side of TH 18 just NW of the Pine River	Hwy District Reference	TH 18 1A 70.2
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Pine Lake Township Pine 43N 21W Sec 8 Giese Z15 E497720 N5118260	Acres Rest Area Class	.9 4
Designer	Unknown	SP #	
Builder	Works Progress Administration (WPA) Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam Roadside Parking Area Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam	MHS Photo #	013536.13-19
Yr of Landscape Design	Ca. 1960	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
Historic Context			
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Dam	1937	10-09-97
			Prep by
			Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 72
			Prep for
			Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ **BRIEF**

Big Pine Lake Roadside Parking Area is a .9-acre site located on the southwestern side of T.H. 18 (formerly T.H. 66), at the western end of Bridge 8921, which stands at the northern end of Big Pine Lake. It is located about .10 mile west of CSAH 38 in Section 8 of Pine Lake Township, about 4.2 miles east of Giese, and about 6 miles west of Finlayson.

■ **STANDING STRUCTURES**

Dam. Built 1937 by the WPA. The only standing structure on the site is a small, poured concrete dam located south of the parking area. The dam is situated at the northern end of Big Pine Lake (where it drains into the Pine River) and presumably helps control the level of Big Pine Lake. The dam is about 20' wide. The abutments are 8' and 10' long, with 6' wing walls. Across the top of the dam is a metal I-beam supporting a many-tined debris rake. There is a metal plaque on the dam that reads, "Works Projects Administration 1937." The banks of the stream at the ends of the wing walls have been riprapped. Concrete has been crudely poured over the riprapping fairly recently.

■ **OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS**

The site has a rectangular, asphalt-paved parking area that has become irregular in shape where the asphalt has eroded (e.g., the eastern half of the parking area is now gravel because the asphalt has apparently worn away.) The parking area is lined with timber posts on the southern end and also on the northeastern side. Near the southwestern corner is a gravel boat launching ramp. The dam separates Big Pine Lake from the Pine River that flows under T.H. 18 beneath Bridge 8921 and then twists off to the northeast.

The parking area is surrounded by tall grasses and dense forest. The topography is basically flat.

■ **SETTING**

The site is located in a rural, forested setting on the northern shore of Big Pine Lake. It is surrounded by Big Pine Lake to the south, the swampy floodplain of the Pine River to the north and northeast, and forests in all directions.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

No original site plans or dam plans were located.

The dam appears to be intact. The riprapping at the ends of the wing walls has been covered recently with concrete.

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

Notes on Condition

The dam is in fair to good condition. Part of the pavement in the parking area has apparently worn away. The site is minimally maintained.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The dam at this site, which predates the roadside parking area, was constructed in 1937 by the WPA to control the level of Big Pine Lake. Historian Rolf Anderson writes: "Conservation structures were constructed [by the WPA] throughout Minnesota in order to manage forests, wildlife, and the state's water resources. The WPA alone was responsible for more than 250 conservation projects. . . . Hundreds of dams were constructed throughout the state in order to provide more dependable domestic water supply and more uniform flows for power production. . . . The most common dam was the 'Type C,' a small structure usually constructed at the outlet of a lake" (Anderson 1990/1993:F17).

According to a 1949 history of Pine County: "In all, there have been four dams built on the original site at Big Pine Lake. The first three were of log, earth, lumber, and rock construction. In 1932 [sic] a new dam, of concrete and steel, was built under the WPA" (*One Hundred Years in Pine County* 1949:57). One of the first dams was apparently built by the Stillwater Lumber Company.

The Big Pine Lake Roadside Parking Area was constructed by the Minnesota Department of Highways at an unknown date. The current Bridge 8921 was built in 1956. Mn/DOT Site Development Unit files indicate that in 1961 this site had two toilets and a bituminous parking area.

■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

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

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Big Pine Lake Roadside Parking Area was constructed by the MHD circa 1960. The site has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the property is NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it does not meet the context's registration requirements. The WPA-built dam itself is a small structure of the type commonly built for conservation purposes by the WPA. It does not meet the registration requirements established under the historic context "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943."

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 18 past this site is fairly quiet.

■ REFERENCES

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.

One Hundred Years in Pine County. Askov, MN: Pine County Historical Society, 1949.

Rose, Nancy E. *Put to Work. Relief Programs in the Great Depression.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994.

Tweton, Jerome D. *The New Deal at the Grass Roots. Programs for the People in Otter Tail County, Minnesota.* St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988.

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Big Pine Lake, located in Aitkin and Pine counties, was named for the extensive acreage of white and red (Norway) pine that surrounded the lake. Pine Lake Township, established in 1895, was settled by Euro-Americans attracted to the area by work in the logging camps and sawmills. The Stillwater Lumber Company and the Rutledge Lumber Company were the first to establish logging operations in the area. T.H. 18, formerly T.H. 66, passes through the center of Pine Lake Township from east to west.