

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SL-DUL-2429  
CS 6910  
Fond du Lac Historical Marker

<b>Historic Name Other Name</b>	Fond du Lac Historical Marker	<b>CS # SHPO Inv #</b>	6910 SL-DUL-2429
<b>Location</b>	N side of TH 23 between 130th and 131st Ave W	<b>Hwy District Reference</b>	TH 23 1A 336.3
<b>City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM</b>	Duluth, City of St. Louis 48N 15W Sec 8 Esko Z15 E555660 N5167460	<b>Acres Rest Area Class</b>	4
<b>Designer</b>	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	<b>SP #</b>	6910-29
<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>	013537.21-24
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1956	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Ols 3.127b
<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>			
<b>List of Standing Structures</b>			
<b>Feat#</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Fieldwork Date</b>
01	Marker	1956	10-09-97
			<b>Prep by</b>
			Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 22
			<b>Prep for</b>
			Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			
<b>Final Report</b>	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The Fond du Lac Historical Marker is located on the northern side of T.H. 23 ("Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive") within Fond du Lac, a community on the northern bank of the St. Louis River that is now within the boundaries of the City of Duluth. The site is located between 130th Ave. W. and 131st Ave. W, both of which intersect T.H. 23. (This location was formerly known as 93rd and Boyd Ave., apparently before street renaming.)

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Stone Marker.** Built 1956 by the MHD. The principal structure on the site is a lectern-style marker built of tan, rockfaced, random ashlar limestone laid on a concrete footing. It is approximately 4'2" square and 4' tall on the rear (taller) side. Mounted on the marker's slanted top is a bronze plaque with the seals of the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society cast near the bottom. The text of the plaque addresses the founding of Fond du Lac. (See marker text at the end of this document.)

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The marker stands just north of the site's curving highway pull-off drive, which doubles as a parking area. The marker is positioned at about the midpoint of the parking area. The drive and parking area are paved with asphalt and lined with a concrete curb. A deteriorated, 4'-wide, poured concrete island is located between the parking area and T.H. 23. The topography of the site is basically flat.

The original plans specify the planting of a series of American Elm and Colorado Spruce in the median of T.H. 23 in front of the site.

Today, most of the site is planted with grass. There are 16 flowering trees planted about 15' apart in an east-west row north of the marker. North of these trees are several widely-scattered mature trees such as ash, maple, and pine, and an area of tall, unmowed grass that is probably off of the right-of-way.

A circa 1964 historic photograph indicates that there was a hanging-arm style wooden sign on the eastern edge of the parking area. The sign appears to have been one of the standard, wooden hanging-arm signs used by the Roadside Development Division. The signs usually read "Roadside Parking Area."

This portion of T.H. 23 is known as Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive. For about three-quarters of a mile through the community of Fond du Lac, T.H. 23 is a wide, shaded, parkway-like divided highway. The grassy median between the two highway lanes is planted with mature deciduous and evergreen trees.

■ SETTING

The site is located in a primarily residential setting near the eastern edge of the settlement of Fond du Lac. T.H. 23 forms the southern border of the site. It is surrounded by a

residential neighborhood on the south, a city park to the west, and sparsely wooded areas to the north and east. The St. Louis River is located about 1.5 blocks to the south, and is barely visible from the site.

#### ■ INTEGRITY

##### **Alterations**

The 1955 plans specify that the parking area be rectangular in shape with only one entrance and a set of concrete posts. According to early historic photos it was built instead with a curved shape and no posts.

The site appears to be essentially intact. The parking area has been paved with asphalt, the hanging-arm "Roadside Parking Area" sign has been removed, and the marker is missing several stones.

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

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

The marker is in poor condition and missing several stones.

#### ■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site was built as part of a 7.1-mile roadside development project along T.H. 23 in 1956. The plans were signed in October of 1955 by Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development Division), E. J. Rowland (Engineer of Lands and Right-Of-Way), R. J. Wolfangle (Engineer of Plans), Walter Schultz (Assistant Engineer of Plans and Surveys), L. H. Miller (District Engineer), G. G. Gladman (Engineer of Plans and Surveys), and J. C. Robbers (Asst. Chief Engineer). The project also included planting Colorado Spruce and American Elms in the grassy median on the divided roadway.

The Fond du Lac Historical Marker was erected in 1956 by the St. Louis County Historical Society in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways and the Minnesota Historical Society. In 1958, the Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission approved a request from Mrs. Josiah E. Greene, executive secretary of the St. Louis County Historical Society, to correct text errors on the historic marker plaque. The Commission approved the preparation of a new legend to replace the inaccurate text. However, the plaque had not been replaced by 1960, according to the March 24, 1960, minutes of the Commission.

Site Development Unit files indicate that in circa 1964 this site contained curbing, picnic tables, refuse containers, and an historic marker.

Evergreen Memorial Drive was dedicated on October 5, 1947, to the men and women of Carlton, Pine, and St. Louis Counties who had served in the Armed Forces. Thirty-nine years later, on October 5, 1986, a 43-mile-long portion of T.H. 23 was rededicated as Veteran's Evergreen Memorial Drive. Dedication ceremonies were held at the city park in Bruno, Minnesota. Local, district, and state Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) dignitaries, and other

officials attended, and featured speaker was the legislation's sponsor, State Senator Florian Chmielewski.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Fond du Lac Historical Marker is a roadside parking area with a simple site design that was developed in the 1950s by the MHD. Its stone marker is very similar to markers at nine other properties in this inventory. Numerous lectern style, tan, limestone markers in this series were built by the MHD in the 1950s-1970s. The site is a public element on the well-landscaped parkway in Fond du Lac known as "Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive."

This property 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.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 23 past this site was fairly quiet during this October field visit but is probably busy during the summer months. This wayside rest is located on a beautiful parkway which enhances its site, while the parkway is, in turn, enhanced by the rest area.

This site may be associated with local historic contexts established by the City of Duluth's Heritage Preservation Commission.

The text of the historic marker is associated with the village of Fond du Lac. It is not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ **REFERENCES**

Aguar, Charles E. *Exploring St. Louis County's Historical Sites*. Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society, 1971.

Minutes of Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers Commission. Nov. 3, 1958 and Mar. 24, 1960. Mathilde Rice Elliot Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

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

Waters, Thomas F. *The Superior North Shore*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MARKER TEXT**

**Fond du Lac**

The Fond du Lac area, located along an important canoe route, was the site of an Ojibwe settlement in the 16th through 19th centuries. "Fond du Lac" is a French word that means "Farther end of the lake" or "Head of the lake." Fond du Lac became a trading post of the American Fur Company in 1817. Fond du Lac was the headquarters for the company, served many smaller inland posts, and operated for 25 years. Mission Creek was named for an Ojibwe mission that was located at Fond du Lac during the 1830s. In 1842 the American Fur post was purchased by the Missouri Fur Company which operated until 1848. In 1854 the Treaty of La Pointe was signed at Fond du Lac, by which the Ojibwe relinquished mineral rights in the area. The village of Fond du Lac was platted in 1856 and incorporated in 1857. Fond du Lac was one of eight small communities that were absorbed by the growing city of Duluth. Fond du Lac was incorporated into Duluth in 1895.

**Text of Metal Plaque**

"Fond Du Lac. Fond du Lac was incorporated in 1857 and became a part of the city of Duluth in 1895. This is the site of a major Chippewa Indian settlement from the 16th through the 19th centuries and is situated on the early canoe route along the St. Louis River from Lake Superior to Lake Vermillion and the upper Mississippi. Daniel Graysolon, Sieur du Lhut, visited the site in 1679. The American Fur Company established a trading post in 1817. Louis Cass camped here in 1820 while searching for the source of the Mississippi River as did Henry R. Schoolcraft in 1826. The Chippewa Indian treaty negotiated by Cass was signed at Fond du Lac in 1826.

"A branch of the Superior-St. Paul Military Road was built to Fond du Lac about 1856, and the first railroad to reach Duluth -- the Lake Superior and Mississippi -- was constructed to the settlement in 1870. Erected by the St. Louis County Historical Society in cooperation with the Minnesota Highway Department 1956." [Seals of State of Minnesota Department of Highways and Minnesota Historical Society]