

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

TO-HEW-012  
CS 7709  
Hewitt Roadside Parking Area

<b>Historic Name</b> <b>Other Name</b>	Hewitt Roadside Parking Area	<b>CS #</b> <b>SHPO Inv #</b>	7709 TO-HEW-012
<b>Location</b>	SE Corner of jct TH 71 and TH 210	<b>Hwy</b> <b>District</b> <b>Reference</b>	TH 71 3A 216
<b>City/Township</b> <b>County</b> <b>Twp Rng Sec</b> <b>USGS Quad</b> <b>UTM</b>	Hewitt, City of Todd 133N 35W Sec 21 Bertha Z15 E338840 N5132110	<b>Acres</b> <b>Rest Area Class</b>	2 3
<b>Designer</b>	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	<b>SP #</b>	7709
<b>Builder</b>	Works Progress Administration (WPA)	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	
<b>Historic Use</b> <b>Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	014745.08-25
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1936	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Ols 1.165
<b>Overall Site Integrity</b>	Moderately Altered		
<b>Review Required</b>	Yes		
<b>National Register Status</b>	Not 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
01	Dam	1936
02	Spring Water Outlet	1936
03	Picnic Table(s), Stone	1936
04	Privies	Ca. 1960
05	Picnic Shelter(s)	Ca. 1978

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

**Fieldwork Date**  
10-07-02

**Prep by**  
Gemini Research  
May. 04 G1. 108

**Prep for**  
Site Development Unit  
Cultural Resources Unit  
Environmental Studies Unit

**Final Report**      Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minn Trunk Hwys (1998) **Addendum**

■ **BRIEF**

The Hewitt Roadside Parking Area (R.P.A.) is a 2-acre wayside rest located just within the western city limits of Hewitt. The park was created at the point where T.H. 71 and T.H. 210 intersect each other and cross the Wing River. The park is located at the southeastern corner of the highway intersection and contains a dam, stone and concrete picnic tables, and other features.

■ **STANDING STRUCTURES**

**Dam.** Built 1936 by the WPA. Near the northwestern corner of the park is a small, simple, low concrete dam. The dam was apparently built for recreational purposes, that is to create a pool for swimming and fishing. The water falling over the dam is an audible feature of the northwestern corner of the park.

**Stone Springhouse.** Built 1936 by the WPA. The park's most unusual structure is a stone spring enclosure that is located near the northeastern corner of the site. The enclosure is 7' x 12' and built of randomly-laid pink and gray granite. Many of the rocks are split boulders. The enclosure consists of two parts -- an eastern "house" and a western channel crossed by a small bridge. Spring water emerges from the ground behind the rear wall of the house, is guided into the house through a chute, and flows westward through the channel under the bridge. The small house has a gabled, wood shingled roof and a small square window in each side wall. The bridge has stone railings that are about 8" wide and have 1' x 1' stone piers.

After leaving the spring enclosure, water originally flowed westward toward the river via a 2'6"- to 3'-deep open ditch. The ditch has been filled with earth and is now a grassy swale.

**Stone and Concrete Picnic Tables.** Built 1936 by the WPA. Scattered throughout the site are four identical stone and concrete picnic tables. Each table is designed with two trestles, built of randomly-laid mortared granite, that support table tops and bench seats. The granite includes many split boulders in shades of pink and gray. The table tops and bench seats are made of poured concrete with carefully chamfered edges. Each table sits on a rectangular poured concrete pad.

**Restroom Building.** Built circa 1960, possibly by the City of Hewitt. There is a concrete block privy located near the parking area at the southern end of the park. It has a gabled roof covered with wood shingles. The building is divided in half, creating men's and women's privies.

**Lions Club Picnic Shelter.** Built circa 1978 by the Hewitt Lions Club. The Lions Club Picnic Shelter is located a few feet northeast of the parking area. It is a simple, gable-roofed structure whose roof is supported by 10 metal poles. The roof is made of wooden trusses covered with corrugated sheet metal. There are six portable wooden picnic tables sitting within the shelter on its gravel floor.

■ **OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS**

The Hewitt Roadside Parking Area is a triangular site that was created at the place where two trunk highways intersect each other and cross the Wing River. The original plans indicate additional development to the west (across the highway intersection) where a "Lawn" with evergreen and

deciduous trees was proposed. It is not known if this was executed and there is no evidence of any planned landscaping there today.

The vehicle entrance to the wayside rest is on T.H. 71 near the southern end of the property. A short curved drive leads to a parking area that is basically rectangular in shape and aligned parallel with T.H. 71. Both the entrance drive and the parking area are paved with bituminous and have no curbs. On the original plans for the site, the parking area is drawn with one side curved outward -- a shape favored by A. R. Nichols and often seen in his MHD wayside rests of the period. The plans specify that the parking be surrounded by a "rustic guard rail," also typical of Nichols' work.

The topography of the site is gently rolling. The original plans indicate curving foot paths through the site that are not evident today.

The Wing River approaches the site from the west, flows under T.H. 71 into the park, flows over the dam within the park, exits the park under T.H. 210, and then leaves the area to the northeast through a pasture north of T.H. 210. The bridges that carry the two highways over the Wing River near the northwestern corner of the park are undistinguished, modern concrete structures. They are called Bridge 77014 (on T.H. 71) and Bridge 77013 (on T.H. 210) and were built in 1983 and 1984, respectively.

The river is an important landscape feature within the park. Its grassy southern bank is a popular spot for fishing and, originally, swimming. The water is a welcome feature in the hot summer, and the sound of water moving over the dam can be heard in the northwestern corner of the park.

The park has a few small modern elements, including a flagpole, swing set, and wooden sign. The modern flagpole (circa 1960 or later), which is located a few feet northeast of the parking area, has a below-grade base. The metal swing set (circa 1940-1960) with two swings is located near the eastern side of the park. A fairly new wooden sign, reading "Hewitt Welcomes You," stands near the T.H. 71 shoulder on the western side of the park.

The original plans indicate quite a few existing evergreen and deciduous trees on the site, but do not identify them by species. The plans propose approximately tripling the number of trees and shrubs with unspecified, "proposed" evergreen trees, evergreen shrubs, deciduous trees, and deciduous shrubs to be planted in naturalistic groups.

A 1942 photo of the park shows many coniferous and deciduous trees, including spruce and birch, as well as grass turf (Blaske Historic Photo). Another historic photo taken in July 1942 by the Minnesota Department of Highways shows the center of the park filled with deciduous and coniferous trees (Olson vol. 1, pg. 165).

Today, the park has far fewer trees than originally intended and feels open, windy, and unprotected. There are about 5-6 mature spruce and a few mature elm, ash, and poplar trees scattered through the site. There are also some young silver maple, pine, American linden, and birch trees near the center of the park. There are 6-8 stumps scattered about, possibly from American elm that have died. There is a 10'-tall lilac hedge along the southwestern, western, and northeastern sides of the parking area. (There are gaps in the hedge where several plants are missing.) There are small willow trees and tall grasses along the riverbank. There are tall grasses with showy plumes on the riverbank very close to the highway intersection, possibly planted by Mn/DOT fairly recently.

■ **SETTING**

The site is located within the Hewitt city limits. Most of the surrounding land consists of farm fields and lightly-developed residential areas. The site is bounded by T.H. 210 on the north, T.H. 71 on the southwest, and residential property on the east. There is a farmstead with turn of the century buildings located on the northern side of T.H. 210 across from the park.

■ **INTEGRITY**

**Alterations**

According to local residents, the site once also contained several additional stone features built by the WPA in 1936. A stone council ring, four stone fireplaces, and a pair of stone entrance pylons have been removed.

The council ring, which had a round stone fire ring in the center, was located southwest of the springhouse. The council ring was still in use in 1961. One local resident believes that the council ring was buried, rather than demolished.

Local resident Marvel Blaske recalls the park's stone fireplaces. She remembers four of them, one near each of the stone picnic tables (Blaske 2002).

The park's stone entrance posts were recalled by another local resident who believes they were removed during T.H. 71 road work (Budahn 2002). (The Construction Project Log for T.H. 71 suggests this road work may have occurred in 1978 or 1983.)

Local residents also remember a cinder footpath extending from the springhouse to the river. The path has been removed.

A 1946 MHD plan sheet for improvements to T.H. 210 indicate that, at that time, the ditch was crossed by a small footbridge (S.P. 7701-06). The ditch between the springhouse and the river is now filled with earth and planted with turf.

The property retains integrity of location, setting, and association. However, its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling has been compromised by the loss of the council ring, stone fireplaces, and stone entrance pylons, and by the construction of newer features such as the restroom building and picnic shelter.

**Notes on Condition**

The stone springhouse and picnic tables are in poor condition and need repair. The restroom is in fair to poor condition. The Lions Club Picnic Shelter and the parking area are in fair condition. The condition of the dam was not assessed.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Hewitt Roadside Parking Area was constructed in 1936 by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) in cooperation with the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

The Hewitt R.P.A. was among a large number of proposed projects in Todd County submitted to the WPA by local government officials in August and September of 1935. Many of the projects were road and bridge improvements. The projects also included the construction and repair of public buildings, building sidewalks and sewers, and building and improving parks in Hewitt, Long Prairie, Bertha, Clarissa, Eagle Bend, and Staples ("WPA Projects" 1935; "County Lists 34" 1935; "12 Additional" 1935). The Hewitt R.P.A. is listed in the *Long Prairie Leader* as a "park [to be built] in cooperation with the state highway department; federal funds, \$7,281" ("12 Additional" 1935).

Original plans by A. R. Nichols, MHD Consulting Landscape Architect, were drawn in March 1936 and approved the same month by MHD Construction Engineer O. L. Kipp. The plan sheet is stamped "Final Plans Construction Division WPA Nov. 1, 1936." The plans do not specify the springhouse and its drainage system, suggesting that this feature was added to the project plans after March 1936.

The Hewitt R.P.A. was built under the supervision of Harold E. Olson, MHD Roadside Development Engineer. WPA Project foreman was Harold Dull, and WPA stonemason was Ernest Budahn, both Hewitt residents.

Project foreman Harold Dull and stonemason Ernest Budahn were long-time Hewitt residents when they were hired as for the construction of the Hewitt park. They likely served as "LEMs" or "local experienced men" who were hired on federal relief projects to work alongside the more unskilled general laborers. Children of Dull and Budahn tell of their fathers' experiences while constructing the Hewitt R.P.A. From these accounts, the park structures were built during the 1936 construction season, although it is possible that the dam was begun during the fall of 1935 (Blaske 2002; Budahn 2002; Dull 2002; Construction Plans).

The children of the foreman and stonemason were often at the construction site. Because they were children of around 10-12 years old, their memories and anecdotes often reflect a child's view of construction. For example, both Alyn Dull and Bob Budahn tell interesting stories about the horses used for the project. Dull remembers that his father hired him to feed, water, and care for the horses that were used to help construct the park. He noted:

I particularly remember that because I was scared to death of horses. I had to prepare myself every day to approach them. They were housed across the highway at an empty barn that was being rented by the WPA. I was paid \$1 per team per month [to care for the horses]. There were four teams used so my salary was \$4 a month. But, at the end of the winter, the next spring, I was able to buy a new bicycle with the money I earned. And believe me, being afraid of those horses meant I truly earned my \$4 (Dull 2002).

Budahn recalls that the dam was the first project to get underway in the roadside park. He remembers this because of an incident that occurred with one of the horses when the dam was being built:

They were hauling dirt into the park to raise the land. All the dirt was hauled in by horses. One of the teams of horses got too close to where they were splitting the rock. The rock cut the horse in its side, and they had a time with that horse. Boy did that horse bleed (Budahn 2002).

Bob Budahn also remembers that the crew dynamited the bedrock along the river prior to building the dam. "There was a lot of rock in the river, and the river was pretty low at the time because of the drought. They dynamited the rock, to bust it. That was quite a thing to see when you're a little kid." Budahn said that he thinks the original plan was to build a swimming hole in front of the dam, but that never materialized (Budahn 2002).

Budahn recalls that there were always about 12-15 people working on the Hewitt site at one time.

Bob Budahn remembers that the granite was quarried about one mile from the site and hauled in by horse and wagon. He watched as his father built the stone and cement picnic tables and the springhouse. To build the picnic tables he recalls his father cutting and placing granite for the trestles, and laying out forms to pour cement for the tops and seats. "The four picnic tables are [still] exactly as my dad built them," said Budahn (Budahn 2002).

Bob said that his father had two assistants working with him on the stonework. His father would select each stone and his assistants would haul it and help while Budahn cut the rock and mortared it into place (Budahn 2002). Alyn Dull also remembers being interested in the stonemason's work. He said, "I remember watching the stonemason break the rock for the picnic tables, council ring, and springhouse" (Dull 2002).

Bob Budahn remembers that the spring was pre-existing, and that the springhouse was built around it. Alyn Dull, son of the foreman, remembers the ditch that extended from the springhouse to the river to carry the water. He said it was 2 1/2' to 3' deep. Dull vividly recalls the following incident:

I remember people falling into the ditch the 4th of July that the fireworks blew up. Every year the local grocery store sponsored a fireworks display in the park. They'd set the fireworks off by the council ring, and we'd all gather in the park to watch. One year a skyrocket went awry and landed in the washtub full of fireworks, and all the fireworks blew at once. People were running all over the place. Several fell into the ditch (Dull 2002).

A stone council ring, stone fireplaces, and stone entrance pillars were also built by Ernest Budahn and the rest of the crew. The council ring was located southwest of the springhouse and has since been covered with earth. Marvel Blaske remembers enjoying many picnics with her friends and classmates within the council ring (Blaske 2002). Her brother, Alyn Dull, said, "The council ring was quite a thing. A lot of people used it. We kids used it a lot, for wiener and marshmallow roasts, picnics, playing, etc. The school and church youth groups also used it a lot. People always gathered there" (Dull 2002). Apparently a stone fire ring was located in the center of the council ring. Four stone fireplaces were located near the stone picnic tables. They have all been removed. The stone entrance pillars were also removed, probably when T.H. 71 was widened in 1978 or 1983. Marvel Blaske also recalls that a black cinder path originally extended from the springhouse to the dam. The path has since been removed.

Local residents remember that the park with its dammed river was a popular place to swim. Bob Budahn remarked:

In the summertime, people would come from all over the area to swim in the river by the dam. There also was a beach there. Sometimes there were a 100 or more people swimming there. It was quite an attraction when it was first built. It would be plum full of cars out there. People swam there for many, many years. But when the river got higher, dirt came in and filled up behind the dam. So it wasn't fit for swimming. Sometimes you still see kids wading around in there (Budahn 2002).

Alyn Dull and his sister Marvel Blaske also have fond memories of swimming by the dam. Dull said, "It was an enjoyable thing to do. We'd swim in the river, and swim over the dam. We'd ride the water down through the spillway. Marvel was one of the few girls who did that. Water seemed to go pretty fast over the spillway, and it was deep on the other side" (Dull 2002). Marvel Blaske said, "I grew up near the park. The park was a popular gathering place. We always skated there in the winter, and

warmed ourselves around the big bonfires. Lots of picnics were held there. The park was used a lot for many years by swimmers, skaters, picnickers" (Blaske 2002).

The Hewitt Roadside Parking Area is the only park in the city of Hewitt and is used often today as a city park by local residents.

#### **Project Foreman Harold Dull**

Project Foreman Harold Dull and his family resided on a farm located just across T.H. 210 to the northwest of the Hewitt R.P.A. [The farmstead is extant and visible from the park.] Harold Dull's son Alyn Dull noted that his father maintained his dairy farm (employing a hired man to help) while working for the WPA. Alyn Dull recalls that his father worked for the WPA on projects such as the Hewitt Roadside Parking Area, the construction of the Eagle Bend public school, the installation of sewer and water lines in Bertha and Long Prairie, and several other projects in Todd County (Dull 2002).

Harold Dull (1896-1988) was born in Iowa and moved with his family to the Wadena area in 1900. Harold's father bought a farm on the western edge of Hewitt (just north of the Hewitt R.P.A.), which Harold took over and farmed for the next 30 years (Blaske 2002). Son Alyn Dull said, "My dad was a jack-of-all-trades. He attended business school in Little Falls in 1914. When he graduated he got a job in the Hewitt bank as cashier-teller. He took over his father's farm in 1920, and bought the local hardware store in 1943. After that he went into the insurance business" (Dull 2002).

#### **Stonemason Ernest Budahn**

Stonemason Ernest Budahn was born in southern Minnesota and moved to Hewitt in 1920 where he met and married Anna Umlund. The couple had five children of which Bob Budahn is the eldest. He said of his father, "My dad was proud of his stone work and would often talk to me about the projects he was working on" (Budahn 2002). As a young boy, Bob remembers visiting the work sites with his father. He notes that his father built all the stone features in the Hewitt R.P.A. Ernest Budahn also worked for the WPA on the dam in Long Prairie, the schools in Eagle Bend and Hewitt, and the entrance to the Todd County Courthouse, among other projects. Budahn said of his father: "He did everything in that line. He poured cement. He could lay brick. He could plaster. He could cut stone. This was his life's trade before, during, and after the Depression" (Budahn 2002).

#### **■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

#### **■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Hewitt Roadside Parking Area was built in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration and the Roadside Development Division of the Minnesota Department of Highways. This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." While original site elements remain in place, several changes to the site including the demolition of important stone features, the addition of modern elements, the alteration of the parking area, etc., tip the integrity balance to create a general loss of the integrity necessary for National Register eligibility. It is recommended that the property is not eligible for the National Register due to alterations.

The property may also be associated with the "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" and "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943" historic contexts.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 71 and T.H. 210 are fairly quiet past the site.

■ REFERENCES

Anderson, Rolf T. "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Oct. 9, 1990; amended by Anderson Aug. 30, 1993; amended by Gemini Research 2002.

Blaske Historic Photo of Hewitt R.P.A. 1942. In possession of Marvel Dull Blaske. Handwritten date "1942" on front. Back of photo is stamped "Apr. 1, 1943, Brown Photo Service, Minneapolis." Annotation provided to Gemini Research by Marvel Blaske in Nov. 2002: "Council ring in park with a 'fireplace' in center. All made of rock and concrete. This was buried a few years ago. Hopefully some day it will be dug up, raised, and be used again. It was very 'neat'!"

Blaske, Marvel Dull [daughter of foreman Harold Dull]. Telephone conversation with Kay Grossman. Nov. 4, 2002.

Budahn, Bob [son of stonemason Ernest Budahn]. Interview with Reta Dahlen. Aug. 26, 1995. One-page typed summary. Todd County Historical Society.

Budahn, Bob [son of stonemason Ernest Budahn]. Telephone conversation with Kay Grossman. Nov. 4, 2002.

Construction Plans for Hewitt Roadside Parking Area. S.P. 7709. Stamped "Final Plans Construction Division WPA Nov. 1, 1936." One sheet. Minnesota Department of Highways. St. Paul.

Construction Project Log Record. Minnesota Department of Highways. St. Paul.

"County Lists 34 Projects in Application to WPA." *Long Prairie Leader*, Sept. 5, 1935.

DeLaurier, O. B. "Hewitt" originally published in the "Township History" column in the *Long Prairie Leader*, Nov. 3, 1938. In *Todd County Histories: Containing reproductions of the Original Histories of Todd County*. Todd County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Dull, Alyn [son of foreman Harold Dull]. Telephone conversation with Kay Grossman. Nov. 4, 2002.

"Era Work Ends as WPA Program Goes into Effect." *Long Prairie Leader*, Aug. 8, 1935.

"406 Employed On Todd WPA Projects." *Long Prairie Leader*, Nov. 21, 1935.



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"Hundreds Register Here as Federal Relief Program Gets Under Way in County." *Long Prairie Leader*, Nov. 30, 1933.

"More Than 350 Men at Work on 18 Projects in Todd County." *Long Prairie Leader*, Nov. 7, 1935.

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

"12 Additional Projects in County Are Listed With WPA." *Long Prairie Leader*, Sept. 19, 1935.

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

"WPA Projects Submitted by County Total \$405,207." *Long Prairie Leader*, Aug. 22, 1935.

"WPA Spends \$160,000 in County During Past Year." *Long Prairie Leader*, July 2, 1936.

#### ■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### Hewitt

Hewitt was platted in April 1891 and incorporated as a village in 1899. The town was named for a nearby farmer, Henry Hewitt. Hewitt is located within Todd County, which is situated in the geographical center of the state. Todd County is located in a transitional area where the state's eastern forests meet western prairies. Logging was once a primary industry. In 1938, local historian O. B. DeLaurier wrote: "Hewitt began with the coming of the railroad in 1892, and for a number of years was a business point of considerable importance, but when the timber in the tributary territory was exhausted, the activities of the place slowed up" (DeLaurier 1976:253). Today, Hewitt's population is 267.