NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

859

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280
OCT 23 2015
Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Devils Postpile National Monument Ranger Cabin
Other names/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: Devils Postpile National Monument, located on Minaret Summit Road approximately 8 miles from Minaret Summit
City or town: N/A State: CA County: Madera
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide _X_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A ___B ___C ___D

Robert Mutton, Deputy FPO October 21, 2015
Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

National Park Service
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

23 September 2015
Commenting official: Julianne Polanco **Date**

State Historic Preservation Officer, California State Office of Historic Preservation
Title **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall 12·8·15

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	☐
Public – Local	☐
Public – State	☐
Public – Federal	x

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	☐
Site	☐
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling/residence
GOVERNMENT/government office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
GOVERNMENT/government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_OTHER/NPS late rustic or post-rustic____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD/milled lumber_

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Devils Postpile National Monument Ranger Cabin is located in Madera County, California within the boundaries of Devils Postpile National Monument (DEPO) alongside the upper Middle Fork San Joaquin River west of Mammoth Mountain. DEPO is surrounded by the Mammoth Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest, and is accessible by a paved road running west from the town of Mammoth Lakes, crossing the Sierra crest at Minaret Summit. Three-quarters of the 798-acre monument is included within the Ansel Adams Wilderness which extends into Inyo National Forest lands to the west. The small, two-room cabin, built in 1941, is constructed primarily of sugar pine lumber salvaged from the historic Sentinel Hotel in Yosemite Valley which was razed between 1938 and 1941. Despite some changes in materials and workmanship, the cabin retains its overall historic integrity, and is a unique link to the early period of National Park Service (NPS) management at DEPO.

Narrative Description

The ranger cabin is located in a lodgepole pine forest bordering the Middle Fork San Joaquin River where it enters the north end of Soda Springs Meadow. The ground is level, mostly free of understory vegetation, and comprised primarily of pumice soil. Several picnic tables are located northwest of the cabin near the river. This is also the main entry point for visitors to DEPO. The cabin serves as the primary contact station for visitors arriving by shuttle bus. The back room, formerly the bedroom, serves as an office, while the front room, formerly the kitchen, holds visitor exhibits and items for sale through the Sequoia Natural History Association. The bus stops in front of the cabin before continuing through the roundabout that marks the endpoint of the monument entrance road. Also in the vicinity is a flagpole flying the American flag, a small outdoor amphitheater for interpretive talks, a pay phone, the parking area, a comfort station, and the trailhead for the Postpile formation, located 0.4 miles south. The superintendent's office and other administrative buildings are located on the opposite (east) side of the roundabout from the ranger cabin.

The ranger cabin was built in July 1941 from lumber salvaged from the demolition of the historic Sentinel Hotel in Yosemite Valley. The building replaced a temporary tent shelter that had served as the ranger quarters and contact station since the mid-1930s and was the first administrative building in the monument. Previously monument staff believed the cabin had been an outbuilding of the Sentinel Hotel that was trucked to the current site intact. However, the logistical challenges and equipment requirements of moving the building whole versus transporting salvaged material and building it from the ground up makes it almost certain that it was not moved there. A 2014 building inspection also noted the presence of different paint colors on some sections of the subfloor and roof sheathing, not places where paint would typically be found on a new building.[1] The consistency of the design and construction with the more functional late rustic or post-rustic style of national park construction from the late 1930s and early 1940s further suggests that the cabin was assembled from salvaged materials rather than transported intact.

A 1952 building survey described the cabin as an approximately 395-square-foot rectangular milled lumber frame building with horizontal wood shiplap siding, a corrugated iron gable roof, and wood slat gable vents. The building consisted of two rooms: a bedroom and a kitchen. It included a door and window on the east elevation, two windows on the north elevation, and an additional window on the south elevation. The original building did not have internal plumbing or electric wiring. The kitchen included a wood-burning cooking range that also served as the building's heat source.[2]

Full dimension, milled lumber sugar pine beams were used for the wall framing, roof beams, rafters, and floor joists. Sugar pine boards were also used for the roof sheathing and diagonal sub-floor. As noted, these boards currently show signs of paint in different locations and colors, indicating that the materials were recycled. Similar features exist in residences associated with the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite Valley that were also built from lumber salvaged from the demolition of the Old Yosemite Village in the 1930s.

Architecturally, the cabin is similar to the modest shiplap siding buildings built in Yosemite and Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The design is consistent with the simple, functional, modern construction style that gradually replaced the natural stone- and rough-cut wood-based construction that marked the NPS rustic style. It falls under the category of NPS late rustic or post-rustic construction.[3]

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[1] Rod Kennec and Mary Vittore, "DEPO Ranger Station: Results of Historic Integrity Visit, June 19, 2014," Devils Postpile National Monument (DEPO) office files.
[2] Record for "Ranger Shelter, Devils Postpile Campground," August 1952, Form 10-768. National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, San Francisco.
[3] William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law, *Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942* (National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, February 1977). Accessed January 21, 2014 at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rusticarch/part6.htm.

The cabin has been renovated since its construction. These repairs have been necessary to maintain the functional integrity of a building that was initially meant to be temporary. In 1952, the interior walls and ceiling were sealed with Celotex, an insulating fiber board commonly used as an interior finish during this time.[4] A linoleum floor was also installed over the original Douglas Fir flooring. Electric lighting was installed in the 1960s. A more extensive renovation was undertaken in 1979 after the building's foundation was discovered to be sinking. According to Wymond Eckhart, the supervising ranger at the time, a planned full demolition was halted when it was determined that the 2" by 8" full-dimension, unknotted sugar pine beams supporting the roof were of irreplaceable historic value.[5]

While many of the original structural components were preserved, several changes were made during the renovation. Exterior modifications included a new concrete foundation; new windows, doors, and trim; replacement of the corrugated metal roof with a wood shake roof; reconfiguration of the east elevation door and window; installation of new vertical siding (possibly overlaying the original horizontal siding, except on the east elevation); placement of fascia over the south and north elevation rafter ends; and replacement of the wood gable vents with metal vents.[6] In the interior, the wall dividing the two rooms was moved west to create a larger space for visitor exhibits (a strip of patching marks the location of the original wall); wood paneling was installed on the walls and ceiling; the linoleum floor installed in 1952 was removed to expose the original Douglas Fir flooring; and the original kitchen range was replaced with a modern wood stove. The original range remains in storage at DEPO. A handicap accessible ramp and deck were also added to the front of the building. In 2009, the wood shake roof was replaced with metal roofing to comply with safety regulations.

Integrity

The cabin retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, feeling, association, and setting. Although no longer used as a ranger's residence, the building continues to serve its other original function as the monument's primary visitor contact station. The setting has changed somewhat due to the removal of diseased trees, the repositioning of the monument parking lot, the paving of the entrance road, and the construction of the other administrative buildings. However, these changes do not detract from the historic character of the cabin or its setting. The cabin remains in its original location. Newer administrative buildings are shielded or set far enough away from the cabin to preserve its appearance as a simple, unobtrusive, stand-alone building in a minimally developed forest and riverside picnic area setting.

Although the integrity of the cabin's materials and workmanship was diminished by the 1979 renovation, these changes are compatible with the period of significance. Exterior changes—especially the replacement of the horizontal siding with vertical siding, the repositioning of the

[4] The history and use of Celotex is summarized in Carol S. Gould, Kimberly A. Konrad, Kathleen Catalano Miley, and Rebecca Gallagher, "Fiberboard," in *Twentieth Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, rev. ed., ed. Thomas C. Jester (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2014), 89, 93.
[5] Email from Deanna Dulen, re: "DEPO building history," August 9, 2012. In author's possession.
[6] Kennec and Vittore, "DEPO Ranger Station."

front door and window, and the covering of the rafter ends—detract somewhat from the building's architectural integrity. However, these changes do not significantly compromise the building's general historical integrity. They continue to reflect the emphasis on simplicity, functionality, and harmony with the natural scene that were the hallmarks of NPS late rustic or post-rustic construction. The cabin retains its original form, footprint, and many materials and design features. Many of the changes are also potentially reversible. A 2014 inspection revealed that the original siding may remain beneath the newer vertical siding, except on the east elevation which was partially reframed with modern materials to accommodate the new door and window configuration. The building's architectural integrity and overall historic character can be greatly improved by removing the 1979 siding and repairing or restoring the horizontal shiplap siding, restoring the original front door and window configuration, removing the fascia from the south and north elevations, and removing the metal gable vents and rebuilding the wood slat vents.

Original structural materials including the floor joists, rafters, framing, subfloor, and roof sheathing remain in very good condition. The original Douglas Fir floor is also in good condition although repeated sanding and refinishing has worn it down so that the t-nails at the tongues are showing. The floor can be preserved with a good finish, allowing the wear patterns to show. Any additional refinishing would have to be done with great care as the floor contributes to the significance and integrity of the building.

Despite the changes in workmanship and materials, the ranger cabin retains its overall integrity and much of its historic fabric. It conveys the basic form and general appearance of the original construction, and continues to recall the early period of NPS planning and development at the monument.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
CONSERVATION

Period of Significance
1941

Significant Dates
1941

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Shilko, Hiram S. (Yosemite Engineers Office)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Devils Postpile National Monument Ranger Cabin is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with changes in national park planning and development in the Sierra Nevada from the late 1930s to World War II. The period of significance is 1941, which reflects both the date of construction and the start of US involvement in World War II following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. With the start of the war, national park facility development largely ceased in the Sierra Nevada and system wide.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

As the oldest standing building in Devils Postpile National Monument, the ranger cabin provides a unique connection to the early period of NPS planning and development at the monument. It typifies the emphasis on efficiency, creative reuse of materials, and functional construction that became a feature of national park planning and development during the late 1930s and early 1940s. The cabin also embodies the utilitarian approach to planning that formed at Devils Postpile during its early years as a subsidiary of Yosemite National Park. Initially a response to severe budget and staffing constraints, the focus on maintaining quality visitor contacts with minimal facilities became a hallmark of Devils Postpile's administrative evolution. The ranger cabin symbolizes the continuation of this management philosophy to the present and contributes significantly to the monument's historic character.

The cabin is significant in the area of Conservation as a response to the challenges of planning, developing, and managing a small, distant, seasonal national monument with no appropriation of its own during a period of limited budgets, labor force reductions, and increasing visitation to Yosemite and other national parks. The circumstances and method of the cabin's construction, especially the use of recycled materials from Yosemite, in part evolved from Devils Postpile's position as a separate NPS unit under the jurisdiction of the larger park. The cabin also exemplified a shift toward a more utilitarian late rustic or post-rustic style of park construction in the Sierra Nevada and the national park system as a whole in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This change reflected the combination of a shift in aesthetic values, the reorganization of the NPS in 1937 which decentralized the agency's planning and design functions, reduced appropriations, increasing visitation, and the reduction of Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) workforces in the years just prior to World War II.[7] The simple, milled lumber ranger cabin replaced the temporary tent shelter that had served as the ranger's quarters and contact station since the early 1930s and remained the only permanent building in the park until the 1960s. The presence of materials salvaged from the historic Sentinel Hotel in Yosemite Valley in the cabin's construction is a key aspect of its significance.

When built, the simple cabin was meant as a contact station and residence for the on-site ranger and spouse, if married, or two unmarried ranger/ranger-naturalists. The small space was initially

[7] Tweed, et al., *Rustic Architecture*.

sufficient for this purpose. Increasing visitation during the 1950s and early 1960s, coupled with the NPS's commitment under Mission 66 beginning in 1956 to updating visitor accommodations system wide, resulted in plans to replace the modest cabin with a larger modern visitor center and employee housing. Budget issues delayed construction through the 1960s and the expansion plan was suspended indefinitely in 1972 following local conservationists' defeat of a plan to build a trans-Sierra highway through the area that would have significantly increased visitation to the monument.

The cabin remains a centerpiece of the visitor experience of Devils Postpile. The modest, unobtrusive building contributes significantly to the historic character of the monument as a minimally developed NPS unit located in a remote and scenic wilderness setting. The cabin also provides an intimate setting for ranger contact and interpretation. This function has contributed greatly to the high degree of visitor satisfaction at the monument.

Historical Background[8]

The Devils Postpile area first came under federal protection in 1890 when it was included within the original boundaries of Yosemite National Park. At the time, few national park advocates recognized the significance of this remote corner of the Sierra Nevada, and in 1905, mining, timber, and grazing interests succeeded in having the area removed from the park. With the boundary adjustment, the Devils Postpile area became part of the Sierra Forest Reserve, renamed the Sierra National Forest in 1907. This change meant that while the Postpile area remained under federal protection, it would be open to commercial development that met the Forest Service's utilitarian criteria. In 1910 a group of miners submitted a petition to blast portions of the Postpile formation for materials to build a rock-fill hydroelectric dam on the Middle Fork San Joaquin River. Forest Service engineer Walter Huber regarded the proposal as "wanton destruction of scenery" and worked with colleagues in the Forest Service and members of the Sierra Club to protect the Postpile as a national monument under the terms of the 1906 American Antiquities Act.

President William H. Taft authorized the creation of DEPO in 1911 to protect its namesake formation and nearby Rainbow Falls. The establishing legislation identified the "scientific interest" of these features as the reason for their protection. The monument also drew attention to an area that Sierra Club leader Joseph N. LeConte described as "the most magnificent piece of mountain scenery we have in the Sierra Nevada."[9] In the ensuing years, the monument became an integral component of the regional tourism and outdoor recreation complex surrounding the town of Mammoth Lakes and extending west over the Sierra crest to encompass the Middle Fork San Joaquin River Valley and the peaks and alpine basins of the Ritter Range.

[8] Information in this section comes primarily from Christopher E. Johnson, *Nature and History on the Sierra Crest: Devils Postpile and the Mammoth Lakes Sierra* (Seattle: National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, 2013). Additional secondary and archival sources are cited where necessary for further reference.
[9] Joseph N. LeConte, "The Devil's Postpile," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 8, no. 3 (1912): 170.

At first a unit of the Forest Service, Devils Postpile was placed under the administration of Yosemite National Park in 1934 in accordance with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 order transferring the national monuments to the NPS. Following this, Yosemite struggled to provide adequate support for the small, distant monument. On-site staff made the most of the situation, developing creative responses to limited budgets, minimal staffing, and difficult access. In the early years, the monument ranger worked with the Forest Service and its permit holder at nearby Reds Meadow Resort and Pack Station to improve facilities and accommodate increasing visitation.

While Yosemite provided funds for some projects including a boundary survey, a footbridge across the river, picnic tables for the campground, a bulletin board, and road signs, other development needs were left unaddressed. Vernon Lowery, the ranger assigned to the monument during the first season under Yosemite, made his own interpretive signs by penciling information on sheets of typing paper and nailing them to wooden box ends. He also took care of all maintenance and sanitation needs, acted as the force of law, and served as the sole representative of the NPS's Naturalist and Ranger Guide Program. Repeated requests for a water supply for the campground, improvements to the entrance road, and a permanent ranger cabin remained unmet through the 1930s.

During this time, the ranger assigned to the monument occupied a temporary tent shelter that had to be rebuilt then disassembled during each season. In a June 1934 inspection report, Ranger Duane Jacobs observed that "by selective cutting enough timber can be obtained to build a log cabin" to serve as a permanent ranger shelter. He also noted that "it would [be] just as practical to use lumber and far cheaper as far as labor is concerned." He suggested that if a decision was made to use local logs for construction, "some method of dragging them in will have to be used as a large area will have to be gone over in order not to denude one area."[10]

The use of recycled materials presented a less labor- and resource-intensive option. The use of salvage wood in construction was also already an established practice in the area by the time the Park Service began considering options for a ranger cabin. According to Taylor Johnston whose family managed the nearby Minaret Mine during the 1920s, salvage wood from the original buildings at Reds Meadow Pack Station that collapsed under heavy snow during the winter of 1925/1926, was used in the construction of "the ranger station at the Postpile." Johnston was likely referring to the Reds Meadow guard station, located near the Reds Meadow hot spring east of the monument. From 1927 to 1934, this building served as the headquarters for Devils Postpile as well as for the surrounding national forest land.

No action was taken until 1940 when Yosemite Superintendent Lawrence Merriam submitted a work order for a ranger cabin. His proposal noted the inconvenience of living in a tent shelter "with the cook stove and table protected merely by a tent fly" in a region "subject to snow, hail, and wind storms." He also indicated that there were no buildings in the monument with the

[10] Duane Jacobs to Superintendent Thomson, re: "General Report on Devil's Post Pile National Monument," June 23, 1934. Devils Postpile, Central Files 1915-1953, Acc. 5121, Yosemite National Park Archives (YNPA).

exception of the "dilapidated log cabin, unfit for occupancy or repair" located adjacent to the Postpile formation.[11]

Merriam proposed a single-story, three-room 19'2" by 26'6" cabin consisting of a living room, a bedroom, and a kitchen. He also called for a small sewage disposal system and a water connection. The cabin was to be based on the Miguel Meadows fire guard cabin in Yosemite, built in 1934 in the rustic style.[12] The cost estimate of $3,680 included the cost of the Miguel Meadows cabin ($1,959) plus allowances for the higher cost of materials, the long distance to Devils Postpile, and the camp equipment required for the construction crew.[13]

An ongoing renovation of the built environment in Yosemite Valley provided an opportunity to obtain materials for carrying out the project. In 1925, NPS Director Stephen Mather announced plans for the replacement of the Old Yosemite Village—haphazard and unsightly in his view—with a new village to be built in a rustic style, using primarily local materials in a way that harmonized with the surrounding scenery. While some of the buildings were to be moved to the new village site, most of the buildings including those of the Sentinel Hotel group were slated for demolition.

The original Sentinel Hotel building, initially named the Upper Hotel, was constructed in 1859, and was one of the first tourist lodges in Yosemite. Tourism promoter James M. Hutchings bought the 20' by 60' two story inn in 1864, two months prior to Congress's approval of the Yosemite Grant that placed the valley under public trust. Hutchings subsequently expanded on the hotel to accommodate increasing visitation. His most notable addition was "the Big Tree Room," a lean-to kitchen built around a 24-foot circumference Incense Cedar. In 1869, Hutchings hired the nature-loving Scotsman John Muir to operate a water-powered sawmill he had imported to make additions to the property. Between 1870 and 1900 the hotel passed through several leaseholders. During that time, six guest units were built: the Cedar, River, Rock, Oak, Ivy, and Locust Cottages. Along with the original riverside building, these units comprised the Sentinel Hotel group.[14]

Removal of the Sentinel buildings continued to be delayed following Mather's 1925 announcement, in part due to protests from museum staff and others who felt the hotel should be preserved as an example of nineteenth century California hotel architecture. Despite the poor condition of the buildings, the Curry Company continued to use the hotel for employee housing and overflow lodging during busy summer weekends through the 1930s. A massive rainstorm

[11] Lawrence C. Merriam to the Director, January 15, 1940, with project construction program sheets attached. Devils Postpile, Central Files 1915-1953, Acc. 5121, YNPA.
[12] Linda Greene, *Yosemite: The Park and its Resources – A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California* (Denver: United States Department of Interior/ National Park Service, 1987), 832.
[13] Merriam to the Director, January 15, 1940.
[14] Shirley Sargent, *Yosemite's Inkeepers: The Story of a Great Park and its Chief Concessionaires*, revised ed. (Yosemite: Ponderosa Press, 2000), 2-4.

and flood in December 1937 caused additional damage to the aging building, prompting the final decision to demolish the hotel beginning in 1938.[15]

Members of the CCC camp in Yosemite were tasked with razing the hotel and the surrounding buildings. The men completed most of the work by November 1938. Oak Cottage and Cedar Cottage were razed in 1939 and 1941 respectively. As a concession to those who had hoped to preserve the buildings, the NPS placed bronze markers to indicate their former locations in November 1941.[16]

Following the demolition, salvaged materials were placed in storage so that they could be incorporated into new construction if needed. In summer 1941, some of the milled lumber was shipped the 126 miles from Yosemite Valley, over Tioga pass, and south on Highway 395 to Devils Postpile to be used to fulfill Superintendent Merriam's 1940 work order for a ranger cabin. According to Carl Russell, Yosemite engineer Hiram S. Shilko was involved in the project.[17] The Yosemite superintendent's monthly report for July 1941 noted the "construction of a temporary ranger cabin at Devils Postpile," suggesting that Merriam's plan for a larger permanent building was being put on hold.[18]

The decision to use recycled materials to build a simpler, smaller cabin than Merriam initially proposed reflected budget constraints resulting from the combination of a gradual reduction in the CCC workforce in Yosemite and increasing visitation during the late 1930s.[19] "The composite effect of the lessening of development funds and the steady rise in park visitation," write historians William Tweed, Laura Soulliere, and Henry Law, "was to place considerable pressure on the NPS to achieve greater efficiency."[20] One of the results of this was a movement away from the heavy log and stone construction that marked the rustic style of the 1920s and early 1930s toward more modest, functional, milled lumber buildings that were cheaper to build and easier to maintain.

These more utilitarian buildings were still meant to fit with the natural scene. In a 1940 edition of the Department of Interior's *Park and Recreation Progress*, landscape architect George Nason stressed that "simplicity and restraint are cardinal virtues in parks." While acknowledging that use of local materials and rude, rough-cut construction could complement the scenery, he

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[15] Andrew Kirk and Lincoln Bramwell, *The Yosemite Way: An Administrative History of Yosemite National Park*, Draft MS., National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, 2007: 204-206.; Greene, *Yosemite and its Resources*, 855, 870.
[16] Lawrence C. Merriam and John B. Wosky, Acting Superintendent, "Superintendent's Monthly Report, November 1938," December 1, 1938: 5.; Lawrence C. Merriam and John B. Wosky, Acting Superintendent, "Superintendent's Monthly Report, December 1938," January 1, 1939: 5.; Lawrence C. Merriam, "Superintendent's Monthly Report, February 1941," March 1, 1941: 4.; Lawrence C. Merriam, "Superintendent's Monthly Report, November 1941," December 1, 1941: 3. Yosemite Digital Science Library.
[17] Russell to Hill in Russell to Regional Director, March 28, 1952.
[18] Frank A. Kittredge, Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1941, August 12, 1941, 3.
[19] National Park Service, "Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2007, Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park," Yosemite National Park, 2007: 70-71.
[20] Tweed, et al., *Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942*.

observed that the rustic buildings in vogue during the 1920s and early 1930s tended to shade into "a species of tawdry circus showmanship, not examples of simple honesty."[21]

The Devils Postpile ranger cabin reflected this larger shift in architectural philosophy. However, the simple building was also a practical response to local concerns, specifically the limited budgets and difficult access that had been factors in the monument's administration since its establishment. These factors continued to dictate management and development plans as visitation to Devils Postpile increased in the early 1940s.

The US entry into World War II following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the accompanying drop in park appropriations further limited Yosemite's ability to devote funds and manpower to Devils Postpile. By 1943, Yosemite could no longer spare even a single ranger to oversee the monument during the summer season. In July, Superintendent Frank Kittredge negotiated a transfer of on-site operating duties to the Inyo National Forest as a wartime expediency. This arrangement continued after the war until 1952 when Yosemite resumed oversight. During this time, Forest Ranger Lee Verret, who was stationed at the forest ranger cabin in Reds Meadow, spent one day a week at the monument to perform maintenance including emptying the garbage and cleaning the toilets in the campground.[22] Forest Service crews also periodically used the monument ranger cabin for equipment storage and for "semi-emergencies" during the fall and winter.[23]

At the start of the first season back under Yosemite in 1952, Superintendent Russell approved a facilities rehabilitation program that included $600 for repairs to the ranger cabin after nearly a decade of limited use.[24] Assistant Regional Director Sanford Hill initially questioned the proposal, citing a 1942 master plan that wrongly identified the un-repairable, partially collapsed settler cabin near the base of the Postpile as the only building in the monument.[25] Russell wrote back, clarifying that the cabin referred to in the work order was the ranger cabin built from salvage wood from the Sentinel Hotel in 1941 and that it was "staunch and good," requiring only minor repairs.[26] Hill subsequently approved the plan, informing the director that "the ranger shelter is a two-room cabin which, except for the lack of an attached bath, provides adequate summer housing for one ranger and his family."[27]

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Carl P. Russell, Superintendent, Yosemite to Regional Director, Regional Four, October 12, 1949; and L.F. Abel, Acting Forest Supervisor to Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, July 29, 1948. Cultural Resources Folder, Devils Postpile National Monument History Files.
[23] John B. Wosky, Acting Superintendent to Mr. Neal M. Rahm, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, August 13, 1948; L.F. Abel, Acting Forest Supervisor to Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, August 9, 1948.; and Oscar A. Sedergren, Chief Park Ranger to the Superintendent, 26 August 1952. Cultural Resources Folder, Devils Postpile National Monument History Files.
[24] Carl P. Russell, Superintendent, Yosemite to Regional Director, Region Four, March 20, 1952. National Archives, Box 17.
[25] Sanford Hill, Assistant Regional Director to Regional Director, March 25, 1952; and Stanford Hill to Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, March 26, 1952. National Archives, Box 17.
[26] Russell to Regional Director, March 28, 1952.
[27] Sanford Hill, Assistant Regional Director to the Director, April 1, 1952. National Archives, Box 17.

A two-man work crew arrived in Devils Postpile in August 1952 to install Celotex, install linoleum flooring, paint the cabin, and perform repairs to the steps, windows, and roof. Work was completed by September. In his end-of-season report, Ranger-Naturalist Richard Hartesveldt noted that "the recent improvements to the cabin have made a remarkable change in it. The two carpenters were conscientious and did a very nice job."[28]

Monument staff continued to struggle to accommodate increasing visitation over the ensuing years. The surge of more than 32,000 visitors during the 1953 season (up from 6,000 in 1938) strained the Devils Postpile's limited facilities and staff. While the ranger continued to occupy the cabin, Yosemite also approved the construction of temporary tent cabins to house the naturalist and maintenance crews. As before the war, however, the larger park had limited funds to dedicate to the distant monument. Infrastructure projects considered urgent since the 1930s—including the development of a water supply and more permanent sanitation facilities—were not completed until the 1960s.

In 1956, Yosemite staff drew up plans for a significant expansion of Devils Postpile's infrastructure as part of Mission 66, the NPS program to upgrade the parks by the agency's fiftieth anniversary in 1966. The plans were based on anticipated increases in visitation resulting from the planned construction of a trans-Sierra Highway connecting Fresno to Mammoth Lakes. Part of the proposal was to demolish the old ranger cabin and replace it with a modern 3,000 square foot visitor center. During the ensuing years, a group of local conservationists, pack station operators, and other Mammoth area business owners successfully fought the road proposal, convincing Governor Ronald Reagan to announce his opposition to the plan in 1972.[29]

With the defeat of the trans-Sierra highway and continuing budget difficulties, park officials determined to shelve the planned expansion. While this meant that on-site staff would have to continue to operate the monument with minimal facilities, it also allowed for the preservation of the original ranger cabin. Even when the need for facilities expansion became urgent again in the mid-1970s as visitation numbers exceeded 100,000 per season and as the cabin foundation was found to be sinking, park staff elected to renovate rather than replace the building, in large part to preserve its historic character and materials. This renovation occurred in 1979 and 1980. Although some changes were made to the building, its overall historic character was preserved. The cabin also remained the primary contact station for visitors to Devils Postpile. At present, it continues to evoke the early period of NPS management at the monument.

[28] Richard Hartesveldt, Ranger-Naturalist, Devils Postpile National Monument to Chief Ranger, Yosemite National Park, September 23, 1952. National Archives, Box 17. Hartesveldt also noted that "a stove with a larger fire box should be used in the cabin to accommodate hot water pipes in the vent of piped water." He also requested a desk with drawers to replace the table then used in the cabin.

[29] The fight to block the Minaret Summit highway is detailed in Jack Fisher, *Stopping the Road: The Campaign against another Trans-Sierra Highway* (The Sager Group, 2014).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books, Articles, and Reports

Chappell, Gordon and Bob Cox, "National Register Nomination for Yosemite Village Historic District." National Park Service, Western Regional Office, San Francisco, 1977.

Fisher, Jack. *Stopping the Road: The Campaign against another Trans-Sierra Highway*. The Sager Group, 2014.

Gould, Carol S., Kimberly A. Konrad, Kathleen Catalano Miley, and Rebecca Gallagher. "Fiberboard." In *Twentieth Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, rev. ed., 89-94. Edited by Thomas C. Jester. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2014.

Greene, Linda. *Yosemite: The Park and its Resources – A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California*. Denver: United States Department of Interior/ National Park Service, 1987.

Hartesveldt, Richard J. "Historical Events at the Devils Postpile." *Yosemite Nature Notes* 33, no. 1 (January 1954): 3-8.

Johnson, Christopher E. *Nature and History on the Sierra Crest: Devils Postpile and the Mammoth Lakes Sierra*. Seattle: National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, 2013.

Kennec, Rod and Mary Vittore. "DEPO Ranger Station: Results of Historic Integrity Visit, June 19, 2014." Devils Postpile National Monument (DEPO) office files.

Kirk, Andrew and Lincoln Bramwell. *The Yosemite Way: An Administrative History of Yosemite National Park*. Draft MS., National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, 2007.

LeConte, Joseph N. "The Devil's Postpile." *Sierra Club Bulletin* 8, no. 3 (1912): 170.

National Park Service. "Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2007, Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park." Yosemite National Park, 2007.

_____. "Ranger Shelter, Devils Postpile Campground," August 1952, Form 10-768. National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, San Francisco.

Sargent, Shirley. *Yosemite's Inkeepers: The Story of a Great Park and its Chief Concessionaires*, revised ed. Yosemite: Ponderosa Press, 2000.

Tweed, William C., Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law. *Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942*. National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, February 1977.

Archives, Libraries, and Repositories

Devils Postpile National Monument History Files

National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno, CA

Yosemite Digital Science Library

Yosemite National Park Archives

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
_x__ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __less than one acre____

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Latitude: 37.629959 Longitude:-119.084866

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the property are limited to the footprint of the ranger cabin, excluding the handicap accessible ramp and deck that were added after the period of significance.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The ranger cabin is a single, stand-alone building, not part of a larger historical site or district.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: __Christopher E. Johnson, Historian, _____
organization: National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office _____
street & number: _909 First Avenue, Fifth Floor_____
city or town: _Seattle____ state: __WA_____ zip code:_98104_____
e-mail: christopher_e_johnson@nps.gov _____
telephone:_(206) 220-4141_____
date: December 22, 2014; Revised September 2015_____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Devils Postpile National Monument Ranger Cabin
City or Vicinity: Devils Postpile National Monument
County: Madera State: California

Photo 1 of 5:
East elevation (front), camera facing west.
Photographer: Brandon Blackburn
Date of Photograph: 2015
Location of Original Digital File: Devils Postpile National Monument

Photo 2 of 5:
Interior, east (front) room, camera facing west.
Photographer: Brandon Blackburn
Date of Photograph: 2015
Location of Original Digital File: Devils Postpile National Monument

Photo 3 of 5:
Interior, east (front) room, camera facing north. Note the floor patching marking the original location of the dividing wall. Also note the exposed T-nails at the tongues of the flooring boards.
Photographer: Brandon Blackburn
Date of Photograph: 2013
Location of Original Digital File: Devils Postpile National Monument.

Photo 4 of 5:
Attic view, camera facing west, showing full dimension sugar pine roof rafters and roof sheathing with different paint colors visible.
Photographer: Rod Kennec
Date of Photograph: 2014
Location of Original Digital File: Yosemite National Park

Photo 5 of 5:
Original horizontal shiplap siding profile visible at the side of the west elevation gable vent, circled in the center of the photo, camera facing south.
Photographer: Rod Kennec
Date of Photograph: 2014
Location of Original Digital File: Yosemite National Park

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Devils Postpile National Monument Ranger Cabin — Madera, CA
Name of Property — County and State

Location Map

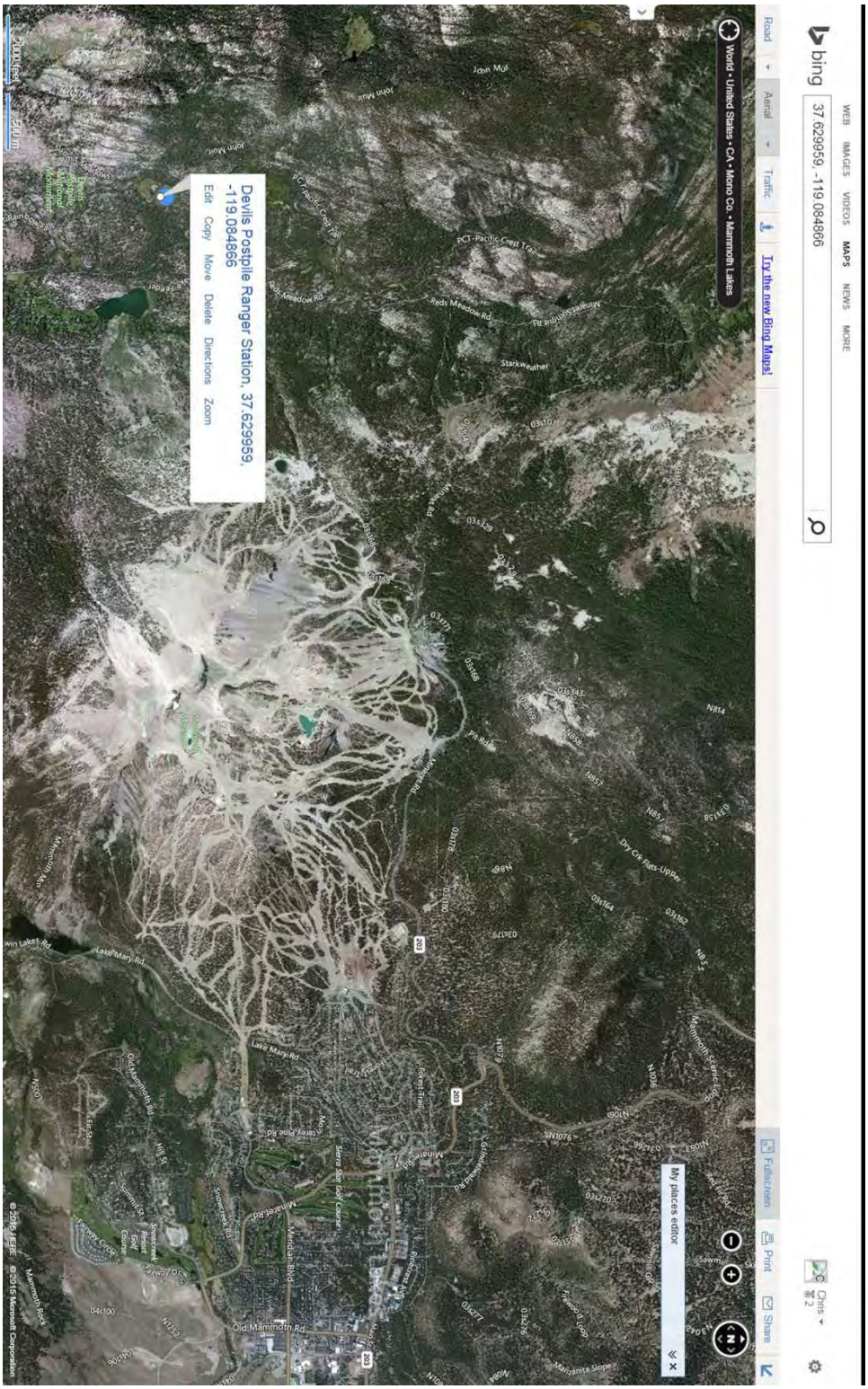
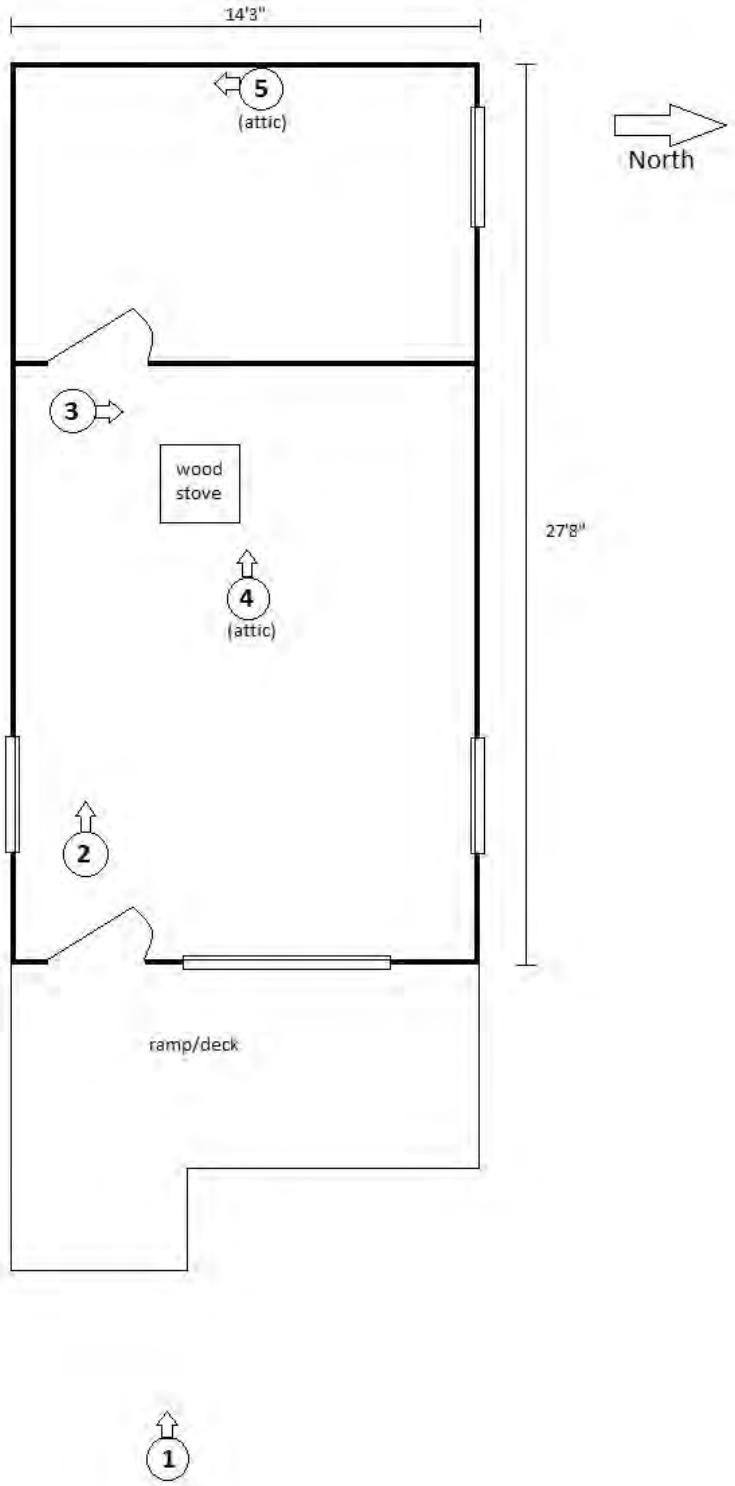


Photo Key.



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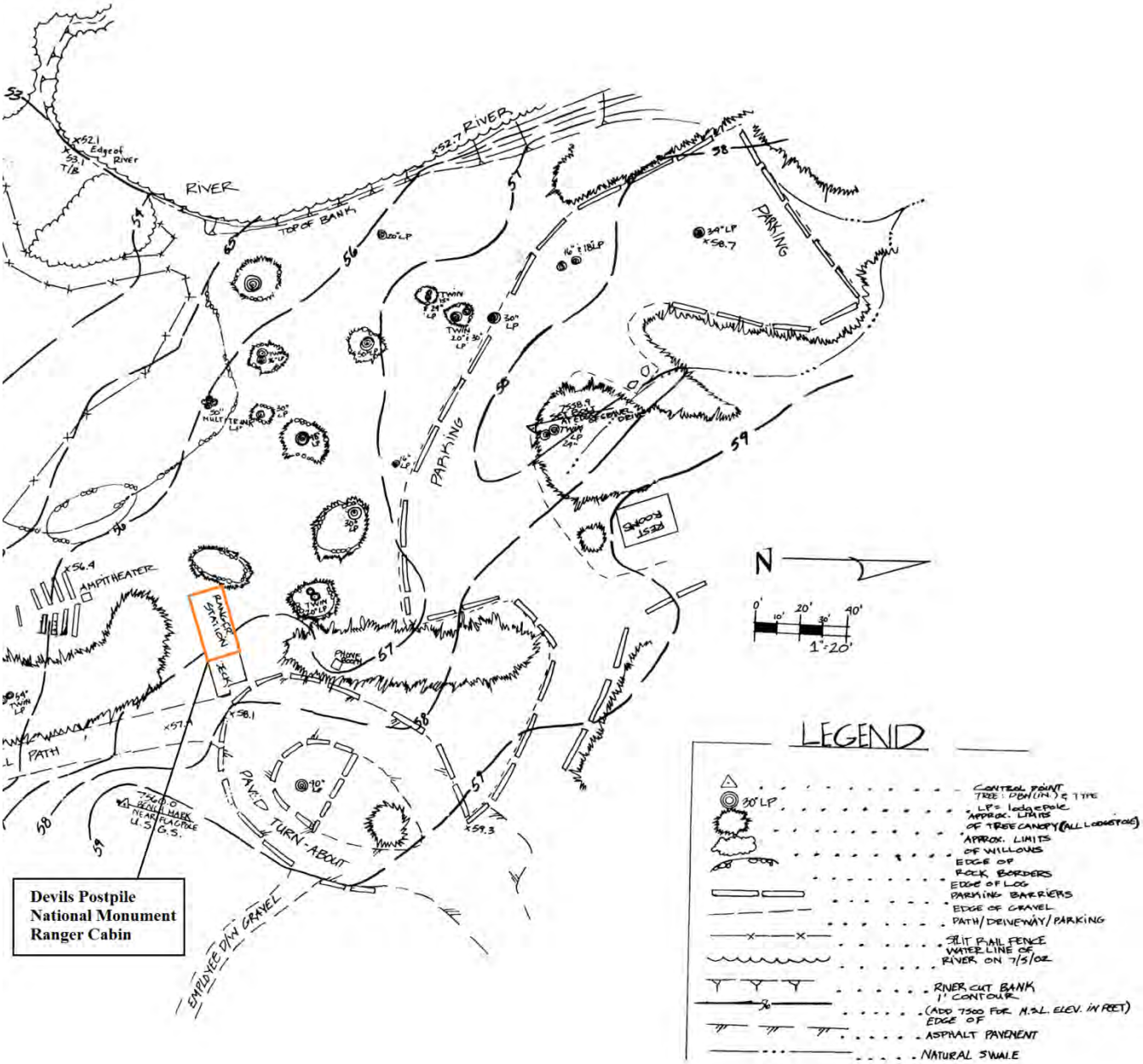

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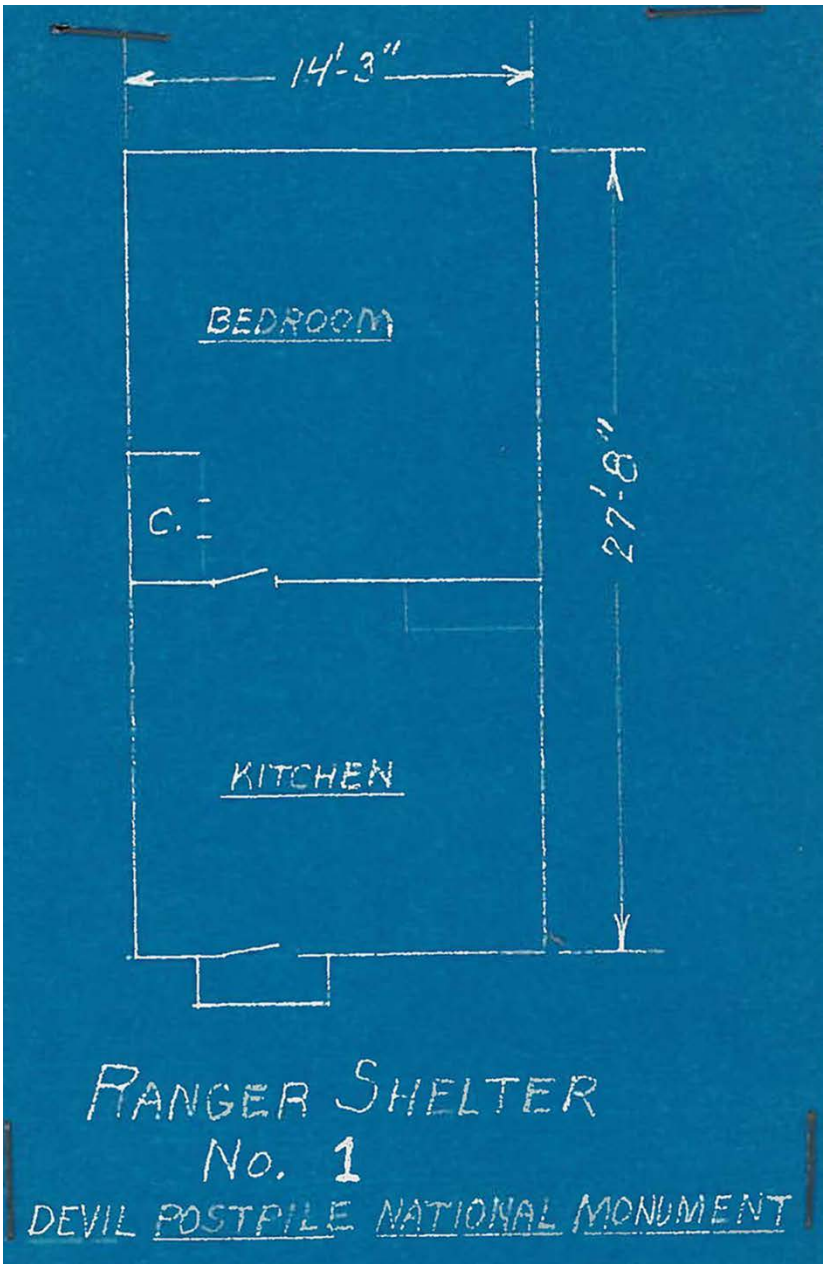

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RANGER STATION
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NATIONAL MONUMENT
ELEVATION 7560
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Devils Postpile
National Monument
Bird Sightings
Animal Tracks of the Sierra