

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Date listed 1-12-2012
NRIS No. 11001028
Oregon SHPO

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Oregon Caves Historic District (Boundary Increase)
other names/site number Lake Mountain Trail, Big Tree Trail, Cliff Nature Trail, No Name Trail, Cave Exit Trail

2. Location

street & number Oregon Caves National Monument, 19000 Caves Highway not for publication
city or town Cave Junction vicinity
state Oregon code OR county Josephine code 033 zip code 97523

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 local

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Christi Cunn 8-12-11
Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer _____ Oregon SHPO
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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
4	1	structure
		object
4	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION
TRANSPORTATION

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION
TRANSPORTATION

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: NPS Rustic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A
walls: N/A
roof: N/A
other: EARTH; STONE; WOOD

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Oregon Caves National Monument consists of 480 acres and lies deep within the Siskiyou Mountains of southwest Oregon. Complex geology, steep topography, and a diverse flora are characteristic of the monument and adjacent national forest land. The monument is drained by Cave Creek and two of its tributaries (No Name Creek and Panther Creek), with the main stream flowing through the cave and emerges at the main entrance, around which the developed area of the monument was planned. Keystone tree species found in this vicinity and along trails include mature Douglas fir, young white fir, Port Orford cedar, sugar pine, Pacific madrone, and big leaf maple. Elevation, aspect, and rock type account for most of the differences in vegetation at the monument, which contains some 400 different plant species. The purpose of this amended nomination is to extend the boundary of the original Oregon Caves Historic District, listed in 1992, to include much of the monument's trail system. The four trails proposed for inclusion in the Oregon Caves Historic District boundary effectively create three loops: the Big Tree Loop, the Cliff Nature Trail Loop, and the No Name Loop, that collectively cover approximately 5.6 linear miles of terrain and range in elevation from 3,680 feet to 5,280 feet. In addition, there are two nominated sections of the system that are spurs on the Big Tree Loop, so the nominated system total is 6.7 miles. These trails feature rustic design principles consistent with National Park Service (NPS) standards of the 1930s and include character-defining features such as earthen tread ranging in width from 2 ½ to 4 feet, average vertical clearance of 10 feet, varied gradient ranging from 2 to 16 percent, sweeping curves, slope treatments such as rounding, as well as some original stone features including steps, recessed benches, and retaining walls. Only minor alterations have been made along the loops and the two spurs since 1941.

Narrative Description

All four trails were either built or reconstructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during their work at Oregon Caves National Monument from 1934 to 1941. The intent behind location and design was to create a pedestrian circulation system that provided trail access for recreational day use in response to increasing visitation at Oregon Caves, while at the same time maintaining sensitivity to the natural environment through the use of specified construction materials and techniques. The designs of these trails were distinctly different from those previously built by the U.S. Forest Service that provided access to the backcountry for fire control and other purposes. The Lake Mountain Trail, Big Tree Trail, Cliff Nature Trail, and No Name Trail were selected for inclusion in this boundary increase because they retain many of the rustic design principles originally utilized by the CCC. As with any historic structure, periodic maintenance has been necessary to perpetuate these trails for safe public use. It should be mentioned here that although the Cave Exit Trail is a major route used by monument visitors, it was not included as a contributing resource in this boundary increase. While the exit trail's setting and location have remained essentially the same since initial construction prior to arrival of the CCC in 1934, widening, realignment, and the addition of asphalt paving in 1958, as well as more recent installation of wooden guardrail over its entire length badly compromised its historic integrity in relation to the designed landscape described on the original form.

General Design Concepts

Like roads, trails go through the same sequence of design and construction: location, clearing, grading, and surfacing. NPS engineers, landscape architects, rangers, foresters, and naturalists collaborated to design key trails for the safety, enjoyment, and edification of visitors, and to direct and facilitate pedestrian circulation in

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both popular and remote areas where roads did not reach.¹ The following components are consistent on all four trails and represent trail design and construction standards of the historic period. These include curvature, gradient, width, height, drainage, and overlooks or vista points. Design components distinctive to individual trails, as well as alterations are outlined in the paragraphs that follow the general discussion.

To the extent possible, each trail was designed using elongated curves to gain or lose elevation rather than tight switchbacks because the former helped soften the trail's appearance while lowering maintenance costs, and was also more conducive to equestrian use. Most of the trail mileage has a tread surface constructed of earth with an average width of 4 feet, and 10 feet of vertical clearance. Sections of trail that had to be cut into the sides of slopes were built using a method of construction called benching which represented an important means for stabilizing trails. It involved cutting into the backslope, but also filling beneath the tread (particularly at the shoulder) to make it level for a stipulated width, especially in sections requiring excavation. Benching usually included the need for dry-laid stonework (assembled without using mortar) on the outslope of a trail, but such work on a backslope was done only at switchbacks and was avoided altogether if the trail's alignment allowed for an elongated curve instead.² Along those same lines, where slope cutting was necessary, banksloping and slope rounding at fixed ratios were utilized to eliminate scars and ultimately minimize erosion. The preferred method for maintaining proper drainage on trails was to use variation in grade as well as creating an outward slope to the tread surface so that water would sheet uniformly off the trail.

Materials used along these and other park trails consist of earth, stone, and wood. Of these, native marble and limestone has been used in the greatest quantity for structures such as steps, benches, and retaining walls. These stone structures were originally built using dry-laid techniques where friction rather than mortar held them together. They demonstrate traditional NPS emphasis on blending structures with the surrounding landscape through conventions such as variation in stone size and color, or gradation of stone size from bottom to top. Masonry structures found on these trails are not historic, or represent original dry-laid structures that were later stabilized using mortar, therefore reflecting continuing efforts by maintenance crews to make them accessible and enjoyable for visitors. Earth was used for trail surfacing as well as fill, and much like roads, it is ideal for cuts and fills to equate during the grading phase of construction. Wood plays a minor role in comparison to stone and earth on trails generally, with use largely limited to non-historic signs, benches, hand or guardrails, and occasionally cribbing.

Recreational use continues to represent the dominant association of these trails, as each was designed for heavy pedestrian traffic. They exhibit the characteristics associated with NPS standards for frontcountry trails at the time of their construction by the CCC, but are distinctly different from earlier narrower routes built primarily for access to the backcountry on the surrounding national forest.

As previously mentioned, each of the four trails included in this boundary increase constitutes a section of a larger hiking loop. It should be reiterated here that only particular sections of each loop are being included in the boundary increase rather than each of the loops themselves. For clarification, the following descriptions of trails should be read in concert with the sketch map on page 23 which provides a representation of the pedestrian circulation system found at Oregon Caves. The Cave Exit Trail is not included in the boundary increase due to a far greater loss of integrity throughout its length of 0.2 miles. It extends from the Cave Exit near point E on the map toward the Cave Entrance next to the Chalet. Integrity varies somewhat on each of the four contributing resources, but for the most part, they retain their original qualities of appearance and function with only minor modifications. A 0.3 mile portion of the No Name Trail is one example, particularly where it continues along Cave Creek below the Oregon Caves Chateau and then through a picnic area before reaching the main parking lot. A landslide in 1942 brought about a new connection with the parking lot and the

¹ Frank A. Kittredge, "Trail Requirements and Ideals in National Parks" (Lecture typescript, NPS Training Conference, San Francisco, California, December 3, 1941).

² "Standards for Trail Construction," October 1934, one sheet, PG-5088, NPS Office of the Chief Engineer, San Francisco, copy through NPS Technical Information Center, Denver.

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flood of 1964 led to some relocation of the trail along the stream. More recently a short section below the Chateau has been surfaced with flagstone, yet as a whole, this trail still appears and functions as it did historically within the broader designed landscape of Oregon Caves.

Contributing Structures

Lake Mountain Trail

Originally built by the U.S. Forest Service, the Lake Mountain Trail was one of the first five trails constructed on the monument. It provided access to the backcountry beyond Oregon Caves for more hikers and equestrians once a road reached the monument in 1922. In 1936 and 1937 most of this trail within the monument underwent reconstruction by the CCC that included widening, benching, and construction of a trail (0.65 miles in length) that connected it with the Big Tree Trail (forming the present-day Big Tree Loop). The Lake Mountain Trail also became part of the Cliff Nature Loop after the Cliff Nature Trail was completed that same year. The trail is accessed directly east of the Chalet and consists of 2.7 miles within the monument, most of which retains characteristics that are representative of 1930s NPS design for "standard" frontcountry trails. The upper portion of the trail (0.8 miles above the connection trail to Big Tree) is closer in character to the narrower backcountry hiking trails built by the Forest Service and is, in effect a spur from the Big Tree Loop. With its predominant northern and eastern aspects, as well as the most relief of any trail within the monument boundaries, the Lake Mountain Trail typically features a lush understory of native plants that include vanilla leaf, ocean spray, Princes pine, various currants, trillium, larkspur, Pacific bleeding heart, and False Solomon seal. It also provides access to a number of scenic areas located outside of the monument boundary, such as the Bigelow Lakes, Mt. Elijah, Lake Mountain, and the Red Buttes Wilderness.³ Within the monument, views of the surrounding country are largely restricted to what can be seen only from the highest elevations, such as along Sand Ridge, located above the Lake Mountain Trail's connection with the Big Tree Trail.

Tread on the Lake Mountain Trail begins with a short paved section of 0.17 miles above the Chalet to the cave's upper entrance. It then becomes earth has a width of between 2.5 and 4 feet within the monument and a vertical clearance of 10 feet. The trail's gradient ranges from approximately 4 percent to 16 percent, varied sufficiently to help ease a roughly a 1,200 foot climb in less than two miles. There are four switchbacks on this trail, with dry-laid retaining walls on the switchbacks being the most conspicuous native rock features located along it. There are several recent accretions to the original work on this trail, including construction of one new retaining feature and three short spur routes. In addition, there is a stone bench and some flagstone surfacing at the junction of the Lake Mountain and Big Tree trails.

Big Tree Trail

Part of the Big Tree Trail was constructed prior to 1916 as a link between the cave entrance and Williams, Oregon. A trail, however, did not reach the large Douglas fir (whose girth exceeds 41 feet in circumference) until 1931. Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees began reconstructing portions of the trail in 1934 once the NPS assumed administration of the monument and completed a full loop by 1937. The Big Tree Loop is most commonly accessed from the Chalet and begins with a short paved section of 70 feet, after which it reverts to earthen tread and steadily climbs over 1.6 miles toward the Big Tree. This loop is approximately 3.3 miles long, of which 0.6 miles of trail are located north of the monument boundary in the neighboring Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. Along the way it gains 1,100 feet in elevation and includes much of the Lake Mountain Trail, which most visitors traverse on their return. Added to the loop is a spur of 0.3 miles in length, one originally built as a connection from the highway for equestrian use. It leads from the monument's northwest corner and is now called the Old Growth Trail. The spur and initial part of the loop provide visitors with a look at drier slopes than elsewhere on the hike, as the vegetation is typified by Pacific madrone, canyon live oak, Oregon grape, and manzanita. Many of the large trees have succumbed to drought and disease, a situation that abruptly changes to more lush surroundings as the trail turns north and then east after leaving the

³ PNR Trails inventory: Big Tree Loop, (Administrative Files: Oregon Caves National Monument), 2.

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monument. As it winds east and then south, having returned to the monument and toward the largest-diameter Douglas fir known to exist in Oregon, the climb is steady and gradual until the trail reaches Panther Creek. There a riparian corridor brings deciduous alder and maple into view, trees that markedly contrast with the large conifers seen en route. Amid the dense forest there are only filtered views of more distant topographic features along this trail, yet quite apart from the 12 ½ foot diameter Douglas fir are native flowers such as the wild rose or orchids like the lady slipper.

Tread on the Big Tree Trail averages 4 feet in width with 10 feet of vertical clearance. Gradient ranges from approximately 4 percent to 16 percent, with the average being 8 to 9 percent over most of its length. Seasonal drainage on the connection trail beyond Big Tree has subsequently prompted the use of water bars and five culverts. Only one of the culverts is believed to be historic. There are, however, original dry-laid benches built by the CCC at six resting places on the initial sections of the Big Tree Trail and a seventh on the Old Growth Trail which are recessed into slopes. This route also provides excellent examples of engineered trail features such as rounded slopes, benching, and drainage where sheeting is evident. Accretions to the trail since 1941 include the installation of recycled-plastic boardwalk and decking around the Big Tree, several culverts and water bars, as well as a few stone steps and some benches with stone masonry supports and wooden seating.

Cliff Nature Trail

The Cliff Nature Trail is located south of the Chalet, the building which currently serves as staff housing and visitor center. This trail is part of a 1.3 mile loop that starts behind the Chalet on the Lake Mountain Trail, with the nominated portion beginning just west of the upper cave entrance, where the Cliff Trail starts, and ending at its intersection with the Cave Exit Trail. The Cliff Nature Trail has a predominant western aspect, and in several places provides spectacular views of the distant Illinois Valley. It has two major overlooks, one with a view of the monument's developed area below, while the other features a panoramic view to the west. Near the cave exit this trail is cut at the foot of some picturesque cliff faces, yet it also includes a representative array of the monument's forest vegetation along rocky slopes and the comparatively lush old growth forest of Douglas fir and its understory of vanilla leaf and ferns.

Consisting largely of sweeping curves with seven switchbacks, the Cliff Nature Trail averages four feet in width with ten feet of vertical clearance. Each switchback was finished by the CCC with a dry-laid retaining wall constructed with a tight radial curve, though the most evident example of CCC workmanship are the stone steps incorporated into the trail.⁴ These steps allow for a uniform rise on the tread in these sections but they also vary the grade in relation to more level trail segments. The gradient of the trail ranges between 7 and 8 percent with thirteen short flights of marble steps to account for steeper changes in grade. Accretions to the original design are somewhat numerous, though they consist of small details such as wooden retaining features that support fills on three separate stretches of the trail or drainage features such as two culverts and one water bar. The Cliff Trail's surface is earth, but other parts of the loop are paved; these include the aforementioned section of the Lake Mountain Trail and the noncontributing Cave Exit Trail. Several interpretive panels have been added at various times, as have short stretches of wood fencing for hand rails at two overlooks and four wooden benches supported stone masonry bases.

No Name Trail

An initial section of this trail was constructed by the CCC in 1937 from the end of a service road that runs west of the Chateau to No Name Creek. It was then extended to the north and east in 1941 to form a most of a trail loop, about half of which (0.6 miles) is located in the adjacent Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. The trail's predominant northern aspect takes hikers through dense mixed conifer forests consisting mostly of Douglas fir and Port Orford cedar, with ferns and vanilla leaf often evident as understory. There are relatively few shrubs, though Pacific rhododendron occurs on a north slope in one place. Visitors re-enter the monument just before crossing Cave Creek, having descended along No Name Creek just several hundred feet. They are

⁴ Stephen R. Mark, *Domain of the Cavemen: A Historic Resource Study of Oregon Caves National Monument* (Seattle: Government Printing Office, 2006), 102.

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soon faced with a choice of returning to where they started one of two ways. The first option is to climb out of a canyon formed by Cave Creek toward the main parking lot and then walk along a roadway to complete the loop. Others prefer following the stream shaded by Douglas fir and maples to the Chateau, keeping to a trail rather than the road to finish the walk.

The No Name Trail is only moderately strenuous since the total relief is approximately 250 feet, and consists of gentler curves in comparison to the Cliff Nature Trail. Although considerably longer in total length, the No Name Trail has nine switchbacks but only one dry-laid retaining wall measuring six feet high. The trail surface is constructed of earth with an average width of 4 feet and allows for approximately 10 feet of vertical clearance. Gradient changes frequently and varies from 2 percent to 15 percent. Only one culvert was identified on the trail and likely is original. The trail also has three original dry-laid stone benches built by the CCC, which are recessed into the uphill slopes similar to those on the Big Tree Trail. While this trail has no designed overlooks, several short dead-end spurs lead to the creek and are likely remnants of the original 1941 trail before a short realignment of this section took place after the 1964 flood. As a result, the trail is now located only on the creek's eastern side. Other accretions to the original design include the installation of several wooden benches with masonry supports, some wooden cribbing used on one short section of trail, and a more recent covered wood frame bridge with masonry supports that crosses Cave Creek. A landslide in 1942 and the flood in 1964 brought about some trail realignment in the canyon, as well as new connections to the main parking area. The section of trail directly below the Chateau was more recently surfaced with flagstone for several hundred feet.

Noncontributing Structures

Cave Exit Trail

The first Cave Exit Trail was constructed in 1931 and has undergone various alterations which have badly compromised its integrity. When CCC enrollees arrived in 1934, one of the first trail projects completed was realignment of the Cave Exit Trail so that it returned to the cave entrance rather than the roadway west of the Chateau. In 1958 the trail's upper portion was widened to six feet and paved over its entire length of 0.2 miles. Shortly thereafter the original trail lighting was replaced, and new steel pipe rail installed on one side. Other work included installing new barriers and seating at the cave exit. The steel pipe guardrail has since been replaced with a wooden rail, which has further compromised the trail's overall integrity since it is rounded log and even larger than the pipe guardrail. Also not included in this nomination is a small section of the Cave Creek Trail which connects the monument with a National Forest campground built in 1964. The trail falls outside the period of significance and contains almost none of the features identified as character-defining in the summary on page 3.

Integrity Summary Statement

Since 1941 the Lake Mountain Trail, Big Tree Trail, Cliff Nature Trail, and No Name Trail have undergone only minor modifications. All four trails retain integrity with respect to location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. Integrity with respect to workmanship has been somewhat affected, given that modifications have been made to several trail components. These modifications include the addition of culverts, water bars, the addition of mortar to what originally was dry-laid rockwork, plastic and metal signage, benches supported by stone masonry, exhibit panels, wooden fence rails and cribbing, plastic decking around the Big Tree, as well as a covered bridge over Cave Creek. While the integrity of certain individual trail sections may thus vary, the vast majority retain essential character defining features listed in the summary on page 3, including form and function, attributes that convey National Park Service trail design standards of the 1930s.

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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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1922-1942, Period of Significance for Oregon

Caves Historic District

Significant Dates

1934-41, Construction Period of 5 Trails

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

Civilian Conservation Corps

Period of Significance (justification)

Keeper's amendment in supplementary listing record for NRIS reference #92000058, listed February 25, 1992. The period of significance corresponds with the time frame of greatest development at Oregon Caves, the two decades between an automobile road reaching the monument and the last major building project, reconstruction of the Oregon Caves Chalet in 1942.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Trails are important circulation devices on public lands in Oregon and are sometimes part of designed landscapes, like that of Oregon Caves National Monument. While there is mention of both trails and walkways as pedestrian circulation devices in the original nomination for the Oregon Caves Historic District as a designed landscape, all five resources described in this amendment were not counted individually as contributing or noncontributing. Additional information about each has since come to light through the monument's historic resource study of 2006 and a trails inventory conducted in 2008. An amended boundary will more logically reflect the scope and effect of National Park Service efforts to develop the monument through the Civilian Conservation Corps by adding four trails as contributing resources. Note that Criteria Consideration G does not currently apply to this amendment, but it did previously for the district when it was listed in 1992.

The four structures, along with other individual trail features pertaining to their original design and construction, are eligible under Criterion A due to their association with the history and development of Oregon Caves National Monument. Each trail was an extension of the park's pedestrian circulation system that emanated from development of the cave tour and the area around its main entrance, both of which expedited the growth of tourism in this part of southern Oregon. The four trails are also eligible under Criterion C as expressions of standards formulated for frontcountry trail construction within the larger framework of rustic architecture that largely governed development in national parks before World War II. Their association with trail standards developed by National Park Service engineers mirrored rustic architecture principles used for designing facilities and landscape features at Oregon Caves during the interwar years. These resources have statewide significance in the areas of Recreation and Landscape Architecture, and have 1922 to 1942 as their period of significance.

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

These four trails are significant in the area of recreation because they represent NPS efforts to provide access by foot to remote areas within the monument for recreational day use. The completion of a road to the monument in 1922 led to increased visitation, and the subsequent development of a trail system for increasing day use beginning in 1934 responded to a greater need for recreational activities that could be accomplished in conjunction with a cave tour.

The trails are also significant in the area of landscape architecture because they represent efforts by the NPS to arrange the land for human use and enjoyment. Trails were adapted to blend with their natural surroundings and at the same time to be cohesive with the rustic architectural theme of buildings constructed on the monument. Trails provided the dual function of preserving undeveloped areas of the monument by concentrating pedestrians on certain footpaths designed to minimize confusion while stimulating interest through use of a circuit designed according to established principles.

The original form served to nominate a designed landscape at Oregon Caves National Monument that took form between 1922 and 1942, having applied criteria A and C to show how the sympathetic use of native materials defined circulation, helped to blend structures into the natural environment, and emphasized naturalistic design to enhance the experience of visitors. Architecture received the most emphasis in terms of significance on the original form due to buildings being identified as five of the seven contributing resources. The four trails nominated as contributing resources on this form relate specifically to the development of circulation systems by the NPS through the CCC which began in 1934 and concluded in 1941. As part of this effort, the four trails contributed to the appearance and function of the monument as a designed landscape having a rustic village at its center, as described on the original form. As part of this designed landscape, the four trails are of statewide significance as part of Depression-era development completed by the CCC under NPS direction.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See the original form, especially Section 8, for a summary of planning and development at Oregon Caves and their historic contexts. That submission, however, lacked a description of the associated trails and thus could not fully address the significance of these structures. Development of a framework with which to assess the significance of trails as part of a designed historic landscape has provided a means for the Lake Mountain Trail, Big Tree Trail, Cliff Nature Trail, and No Name Trail to be listed as contributing resources in the Oregon Caves Historic District. A broader statement of historic contexts for national and state parks during the interwar years by Linda Flint McClelland included a section on trail construction, though few subsequent nominations pertaining to rustic architecture of the interwar period in national parks have included this part of building pedestrian circulation systems.⁵ She describes the parallels with road building, even if trail construction generally required that engineers consult less often with landscape architects about alignment and impacts. Like roads, good location and design represented challenges for the engineers and trail builders, who often had to plan a trail system for use by both hikers and equestrians. Trails at Oregon Caves provided for front country travel by those whose hikes covered relatively short distances in conjunction with cave tours and day use of the monument. They could also provide access to backcountry destinations for users bringing pack stock through the monument on their way to peaks and lakes located in the surrounding national forest.

National Park Service trail standards have their origin in Yosemite Valley, where foreman Gabriel Sovulewski instituted some general procedures to govern location, construction, and maintenance by 1915.⁶ In 1928, funding increases prompted the National Park Service Landscape Division to consider how trails could be designed in a more naturalistic way so they would be more compatible with their surroundings. Trails and overlooks at parks such as Sequoia and Yellowstone were evaluated leading to the determination that wooden stairways, ramps, and railings lacked the durability needed to handle the increasing number of tourists, were intrusive to the natural landscape, and should be replaced with earthen paths and native stone masonry and dry-laid structures.⁷ This thinking was rooted in the belief that such systems "could be modeled and colored to blend into nature's surrounding rockwork," making them virtually unrecognizable as man-made structures when viewed from a distance.⁸

Preserving the scenic integrity of the parks, while at the same time making them accessible to the public, are the two major goals of the National Park Service from its inception in 1916. It is not surprising that by 1918 the NPS began hiring professionally trained landscape architects to design roads, trails, and facilities and to advise on issues that affected the scenery of the parks.⁹ Two of the first were Daniel R. Hull and Thomas Vint, who in 1925 devised plans for rehabilitating Apollinaris Spring at Yellowstone National Park using earthen paths and masonry walls constructed of native stone.¹⁰ Over the next several years other NPS landscape architects and engineers followed Hull and Vint's lead using native stone rather than wood for the design of serpentine guardrails, parapets, and other structures that followed natural ridgelines and could be constructed to fit more naturally into the landscape than the wooden, rectilinear structures that had previously been used. The preeminence of naturalistic design had been firmly established by the late 1920s on public lands and eventually came to be understood as "rustic architecture," with its application peaking in the 1930s.

Aside from its attractive appearance, the longevity of this new rustic design theme was likely due to its flexibility and practicality. It could be utilized at any of the diverse park locations throughout the nation because it allowed for modification according to the local conditions and appearance of each park. This meant that construction techniques could be adjusted to match the needs of specific topography and local weather conditions. In addition, specification for the use of local materials likely eliminated some of the logistical headaches caused by the need to transport materials from distant locations, as well as reduced the overall cost of construction. These appealing aspects further explain why this design theme was utilized to an

⁵ Linda McClelland, "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 8, 1995, 85-88.

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unprecedented extent by the Civilian Conservation Corps in state and national parks, where large groups of men and quantities of materials had to be organized to complete complex construction projects in remote locations under tight budget and time constraints.

Oregon Caves was under Forest Service administration from 1907, then proclaimed as a national monument in 1909 but administered as part of the Siskiyou National Forest until 1933, when control was transferred to the National Park Service. Shortly thereafter, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees arrived on the Siskiyou National Forest forming five camps; none of them, however, were located at Oregon Caves until the spring of 1934 when 13 men from Camp Wineglass at Crater Lake National Park established a spike camp near the confluence of Grayback and Sucker Creeks, eight miles from the monument.¹¹ Having a camp at this location was initiated by National Park Service landscape architect Armin Doerner, who evaluated the monument as too fragile to host a camp, but advised on what might be accomplished by the CCC at the site.¹² The following winter a full camp of 200 enrollees at "Camp Oregon Caves" was busy with projects at Oregon Caves and in the Siskiyou National Forest. They remained based in that location until the fall of 1941.

When the Civilian Conservation Corps arrived at Oregon Caves, aside from the tour route through the cave, only five hiking trails existed on the monument. These included a path leading from the main parking lot to the diesel plant below the Chateau, a trail along Cave Creek which was originally an access route to the monument prior to the opening of Highway 46 in 1922, the original Cave Exit Trail leading from the cave exit to the roadway southwest of the Chateau, a trail beginning behind the Chalet to Lake Mountain beyond the monument's boundary, and finally, a trail starting behind the Chalet and leading to a large Douglas fir (the Big Tree) situated near the eastern boundary of the monument.¹³ While the work of the CCC at Oregon Caves extended far beyond the construction of trails, with projects ranging from fire hazard reduction to upgrades in facility infrastructure, trail construction and landscape improvement projects provided the steadiest stream of work for enrollees.¹⁴ After an initial assessment by NPS engineers and landscape architects, work began on trails at Oregon Caves, with the long-term aim of conformity with the new standards of construction for foot and bridle trails, which were printed for the first time in October 1934 by the Engineering Division of the National Park Service.¹⁵

The standards for trail construction were formalized by National Park Service chief engineer Frank Kittredge and his staff, and provided workers with instructions and diagrams on a large sheet that could be folded into pocket size for easy reference in the field.¹⁶ This and other reference guides available to the CCC, as well as on-site supervision by engineers or trail foremen, provided the foundational training for CCC enrollees. Kittredge, who later became the Superintendent of Yosemite National Park, spoke eloquently at one such conference held in San Francisco in December 1941 on how the need for such standards and policies related to the overarching responsibility of the NPS to preserve the integrity of parks and provide accessibility to them. It is evident from his following remarks that he believed proper trail construction would enable the NPS to follow through with these responsibilities:

⁶ Sovulewski, remarks in *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11-13, 1915* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 51-53.

⁷ Linda McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 234.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ McClelland, 11.

¹⁰ McClelland, 234.

¹¹ Mark, 96.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mark, 102.

¹⁴ Mark, 101.

¹⁵ McClelland, 242.

¹⁶ Ibid.