

# Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
<b>address:</b>	327 Front St Prairie City, Grant County (97869)	<b>historic name:</b>	Prairie City Ranger's Cabin
<b>assoc addresses:</b>		<b>current/other names:</b>	Building No. 1306, Bunkhouse
<b>location descr:</b>		<b>block/lot/tax lot:</b>	B / 2-6
		<b>twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:</b>	13S 33E 2 SW
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
<b>resource type:</b>	Building	<b>height (stories):</b>	1.0
<b>elig evaluation:</b>	eligible/significant	<b>total elig resources:</b>	1
<b>prim constr date:</b>	c.1934	<b>second date:</b>	1958
		<b>total inelig resources:</b>	0
<b>primary orig use:</b>	Administrative Facility	<b>NR Status:</b>	
<b>second orig use:</b>		<b>date indiv listed:</b>	
<b>primary style:</b>	Craftsman	<b>orig use comments:</b>	District office, remodeled for use as bunkhouse 1958
<b>secondary style:</b>		<b>prim style comments:</b>	Simple interpretation of style
<b>primary siding:</b>	Horizontal Board	<b>sec style comments:</b>	
<b>secondary siding:</b>		<b>siding comments:</b>	Horizontal lapped board siding
<b>plan type:</b>	Bungalow	<b>architect:</b>	U.S. Forest Service
		<b>builder:</b>	Civilian Conservation Corps
<b>comments/notes:</b>			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
<b>Survey/Grouping Included In:</b>		<b>Type of Grouping</b>	<b>Date Listed</b>
Malheur National Forest		National Forest	
Malheur National Forest Administrative Buildings Survey		Survey & Inventory Project	2010
<b>Farmstead/Cluster Name:</b>		Prairie City Ranger Station	
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
<b>NR date listed:</b>	N/A	106 Project(s)	<b>Special Assess Project(s):</b>
<b>ILS survey date:</b>	03/09/2010	<b>SHPO Case</b>	None
<b>RLS survey date:</b>	03/09/2010	<b>Date</b>	
		10-0928	<b>Federal Tax Project(s):</b>
		03/09/2010	None
		<b>Agency Effect Eval</b>	
		adverse effect	
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Recorded 3/9/2010 by Ann Sharley, Architectural Historian, Northwest Archaeological Associates, Inc., 5418 20th Avenue NW, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98107. This small front-gabled wood frame building is situated at the western edge of the Prairie City Ranger District compound, approximately 50 feet southwest of the district offices and 40 feet south of Highway 26. The building, a simple Craftsman bungalow, was built by Civilian Conservation Corps crews in 1934 or 1935 to serve as the first Prairie City ranger station (Ewing 1933a; Lindsay 1935; Malheur National Forest [MNF] 1943). Although many elements vary slightly, the building resembles the standard Forest Service plans for a "Two Room Station," designed by District (later Region) 6 personnel in 1928 (U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service [USFS] 1928). In the mid-1950s the Forest Service acquired additional property west of the ranger station and, in 1958, Building No. 1306 was moved to its present location, freeing the original lot for construction of new facilities. Following the move, Building 1306 was converted to a bunkhouse for seasonal employees. Although the building interior has been extensively altered through the years, the exterior remains remarkably intact (Duncan 1994:1-3; Oord 1956). The building is rectangular in plan with modest Craftsman detailing. The low-pitched wood shingle-covered roof features moderately overhanging open eaves with exposed rafter ends. Plain vergeboards, decoratively notched at the ends, ornament the gables, and false beams in the rake appear to extend through the vergeboards as hewn-and-pegged beam ends; the "beam ends" are actually simulations attached to the vergeboard faces. The front façade is symmetrically arranged: two six-over-six wood sash double-hung windows flank a three-panel, two-light wood panel and glass front door. The door is a well-made 36-inch-wide replica of the original, installed in 1994 to allow access for people in wheelchairs. A front-gabled porch canopy, supported on 4x4 posts with chamfered edges, mimics the slope and decorative elements of the roof. Vertical boards fill the canopy face and simple board brackets ornament the canopy-post junctions. A low poured concrete porch deck and gently sloping concrete ramps with modern board balustrades provide access. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation and is clad with horizontal lapped board siding with vertical cornerboards. Additional six-over-six wood sash double-hung windows are symmetrically arranged over side and rear elevations of the building, two to a side. A small four-light casement window is centrally placed on the west wall, between the double-hung windows. The back door, a five-panel wood unit, is centered on the south elevation, accessed by modern metal steps with pipe handrails and a poured concrete porch deck. A square red brick chimney protrudes from the peak of the roof, slightly north of center. A routed sign beside the back door displays the building number. Lawns and ornamental plantings currently surround the building. Visible exterior alterations include the replica front door, modern door handles on front and back doors, modern front and back screen doors, modern replacement front and back porches, and an air conditioning unit installed in the northern east side window. The first ranger station building--the present bunkhouse (Building No. 1306)--was built in 1934 or 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews. Building No. 1306 served as the Prairie City District office, as well as the ranger's living quarters, for more than 20 years. In the mid-1950s the Forest Service acquired four additional lots west of the ranger station and, in 1958, Building No.1306 was moved to its present location, freeing the original lot for construction of updated facilities. The new Prairie City office/warehouse building (Building No. 2005) was built in 1958 and the following year a simple three-bay equipment storage building (Building No. 2302) was completed southwest of the office/warehouse. Both buildings, as well as the site plan, were designed by prominent Forest Service Region 6 architect, A. P. DiBenedetto. The office/warehouse and equipment storage building, however, as constructed, were simplified renditions of DiBenedetto's Modernist designs. In the early 1960s the Forest Service purchased five city lots one block north of the office for construction of a service compound and the warehouse (Building No. 2210) was completed in 1964. In 1994 the Prairie City Ranger's Cabin (Building No. 1306) was evaluated and determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This determination was based on uncertainty about the building's history, a belief that the structure had been built elsewhere and moved to the Forest Service ranger station, documented 1958 relocation of the building to the periphery of the compound, and extensive modification of the building interior. Since that determination was made additional information has been found, identifying Building No. 1306 as a Depression-era structure built on the present Forest Service property by the CCC. The building is also the original Prairie City ranger station, one of few such structures remaining. The Prairie City Ranger's Cabin (Building No. 1306) retains an acceptable degree of integrity. Therefore the building is individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A, for its association with Depression-era work relief programs (1935-1937), and Depression-era (1933-1942) and World War II/Post-War era (1942-1958) Forest Service land and resource management. The building is also eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of CCC construction. The other three evaluated buildings on the Prairie City Ranger Station compound--the Office/Warehouse (Building No. 2005), the Equipment Storage building (Building No. 2302), and the Warehouse (Building No. 2210)--are not individually eligible for the NRHP and do not contribute to eligibility of the compound as a whole. Each of these three late 1950s/early 1960s buildings has been extensively altered and is no longer a good example of Northwest Regional/Modernist design or Forest Service architecture of the period (Criterion C). Loss of integrity also precludes eligibility of the three buildings under Criterion A, for the features' association with Forest Service land management activities. Although two of the buildings--the Office/Warehouse and the Equipment Storage building--were designed by prominent Forest Service architect A. P. DiBenedetto, loss of integrity, as well as construction that varied from DiBenedetto's designs, precludes their eligibility under Criterion B. In</p>			

addition, the ranger station buildings contain no important historical information that is not documented in archival records (Criterion D).

## HISTORY

*(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)*

National Forests in the Intermediate and Depression-Era Periods: In the decades leading up to the Great Depression, the Forest Service focused on timber production and fire suppression. Forest recreation was growing in popularity during the period and the agency encouraged the trend through long-term leases of Forest Service land for private and commercial facilities. Motorized vehicles of the time were still inadequate for long commutes, and Forest Service administrative sites were constructed near the resources to be managed, resulting in small, widely dispersed facilities (Atwood et al. 2005:15-22). Forest Service architecture during the 1912-1932 period consisted of simple log or wood frame buildings, designed to blend with the surrounding environment. This effort at non-intrusive architecture, influenced by National Park Service design philosophies, encouraged use of locally available natural materials, particularly wood and stone, for construction. Many of these buildings are examples of the Rustic style—simple picturesque forms ornamented with wood shingles, wood siding, brackets, or rock—while others are expressions of nationally popular styles such as the Craftsman bungalow or Tudor Revival cottage. In the late 1920s the Forest Service published plans for a variety of building types. Use of the plans, however, was voluntary and many districts continued to build simple vernacular structures (Atwood et al. 2005:46-49). The Depression Era, 1933-1942, saw a flurry of construction on National Forests as Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews and other work relief groups became available for resource management tasks. Guided by agency directives and plans designed by Forest Service architects or engineers, CCC construction in Region 6 often conformed to the Rustic architectural style; other styles, however, continued to be used (Atwood et al. 2005:51-54). Both the Rustic and Craftsman architectural styles trace their origins to the late nineteenth century European and American Arts and Crafts movements. Founders of the Arts and Crafts movements drew on picturesque vernacular medieval building traditions in an attempt to solve society's ills through a return to simpler pre-industrial times. Although the social implications of the tradition were soon lost, the movement's aesthetics spawned a number of derivative styles (Atwood et al. 2005:29, 52-54; Gelernter 1999:207-210; Good 1990 [1938]:5.6; Hill 1990:xiii, xiv; Throop 1979:29-32). Many Craftsman buildings could also be classified as Rustic architecture; classic Craftsman style elements include wide unenclosed eaves with exposed rafter ends, a low-pitched gabled or hipped roof, decorative false beams or braces in the gable, and a prominent front porch. History of the Prairie City Ranger Station: The Prairie City Ranger Station is located along U.S. Route 26 (US 26) at the western edge of Prairie City. The ranger station is surrounded by private land, and expansion over the years has resulted in discontinuous growth. Today the Forest Service offices and a small bunkhouse are grouped immediately south of US 26 while shops and maintenance facilities are one block north of the highway. The first ranger station building—the present bunkhouse (Building No. 1306)—was built in 1934 or 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps crews (Cousins 1934; Ewing 1933a, 1933b, 1933c; Lindsay 1935; MNF 1930-1960; Waha 1933). An historical photograph taken in November 1935 shows the small wood frame building completed but not yet landscaped, and a dirt road leading to a large garage/wood shed at the rear of the lot (Lindsay 1935; MNF 1943). Building No. 1306 served as the Prairie City District office, as well as the ranger's living quarters, for more than 20 years. In the mid-1950s the Forest Service acquired four additional lots west of the ranger station and, in 1958, Building No. 1306 was moved to its present location, freeing the original lot for construction of updated facilities (Oord 1956; Loring 1958a; Stone 1955). Following the move, Building 1306 was converted to a bunkhouse for seasonal employees, a function it retains today (Loring 1958b). The original garage/woodshed had been removed by this time, as it is no longer shown on plan maps of the compound (MNF 1957). The new Prairie City office/warehouse building (Building No. 2005) was built in 1958 and the following year a simple three-bay equipment storage building (Building No. 2302) was completed southwest of the office/warehouse. Both buildings, as well as the site plan, were designed by prominent Forest Service Region 6 architect, A. P. DiBenedetto (U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service [USFS] 1957, 1958a, 1958b). The office/warehouse however, as constructed, was a simplified rendition of DiBenedetto's Modernist design—the prominent bank of windows filling the structure's highly visible west gable end, a classic element of the style, was reduced to a simple four-window band. The equipment storage building, as built, was also a simplified version of DiBenedetto's design—the structure was built with fewer windows on the rear elevation and on both ends. In the early 1960s the Forest Service purchased five city lots one block north of the office for construction of a service compound (Bond 1963a; Lindsas 1962). R. O. Moyer of Weiser, Idaho, was awarded the warehouse construction contract in late 1963 and the structure (Building No. 2210) was completed the following year at a cost of approximately \$26,000 (Bond 1963b, 1963c). Standard Forest Service building plans for the warehouse, drawn up in 1963, identify the designer only as "T.C.M." (USFS 1963). All three of the 1950s/1960s buildings were subsequently modified. Forest Service records document interior remodeling of the office/warehouse (Building No. 2005) in the late 1960s, attachment of two modular additions to the rear of the building in the 1980s, and construction of a full-height extension at the east end in the early 1990s (Heyn 1967; MNF 1980, 1988, 1991). At some point, probably in the early 1980s, the open vehicle bays along the east side of the equipment storage building (Building No. 2302) were enclosed and the structure was converted to additional office space (Tony Johns, personal communication 2010). A covered board walkway was added along the front of the remodeled equipment storage building, connecting the structure with the office/warehouse complex. Around 1987 the warehouse (Building No. 2210) roof was extended to cover the central loading dock area, significantly altering the appearance of the building (USFS 1987). National Register of Historic Places Evaluation: In 1994 the Prairie City Ranger's Cabin (Building No. 1306) was evaluated and determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (Thomas 1994). This determination was based on uncertainty about the building's history, a belief that the structure had been built elsewhere and moved to the Forest Service ranger station, documented 1958 relocation of the building to the periphery of the compound, and extensive modification of the building interior. Since that determination was made additional information has been found, identifying Building No. 1306 as a Depression-era structure built on the present Forest Service property by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The building is also the original Prairie City ranger station, one of few such structures remaining. The Prairie City Ranger's Cabin (Building No. 1306) retains an acceptable degree of integrity—of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Therefore the building is individually eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A, for its association with Depression-era work relief programs (1934-1935), and Depression-era (1934-1941) and World War II/Post-War era (1942-1958) Forest Service land and resource management. The building is also eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of CCC construction. This building qualifies for inclusion in the existing National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form "USDA Forest Service Administrative Buildings in the States of Oregon and Washington Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps / Depressionion-Era Buildings" (Throop 1984). The other three evaluated buildings on the Prairie City Ranger Station compound—the Office/Warehouse (Building No. 2005), the Equipment Storage building (Building No. 2302), and the Warehouse (Building No. 2210) are not individually eligible for the NRHP and cannot contribute to eligibility of the compound as a whole. Each of these three late 1950s/early 1960s buildings has been extensively altered and is no longer a good example of Northwest Regional/Modernist design or Forest Service architecture of the period (Criterion C). Loss of integrity also precludes eligibility of the three buildings under Criterion A, for the features' association with Forest Service land management activities. Although two of the buildings—the Office/Warehouse and the Equipment Storage building—were designed by prominent Forest Service architect A. P. DiBenedetto, loss of integrity, as well as construction that varied from DiBenedetto's designs, precludes their eligibility under Criterion B. In addition, the ranger station buildings contain no important historical information that is not documented in archival records (Criterion D).

## RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	✓ SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	✓ Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	

<b>Local Library:</b>	Grant Co. Library	<b>University Library:</b>	
<b>Historical Society:</b>	Grant Co. Historical Society, DeWitt Museum	<b>Other Respository:</b>	Malheur National Forest records

## Bibliography:

Atwood, Kay, Sally Donovan, Dennis Gray, and Ward Tonsfeldt 2005 Utility and Service Combined with Beauty: A Contextual and Architectural History of USDA Forest Service Region 6: 1905-1960. Prepared for U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Contract No. 56-046W-4-0550. Ward Tonsfeldt Consulting, Bend, Oregon. Bond, F. Leroy 1963a Memo from F. Leroy Bond, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, dated July 10, 1963. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1963b Memo from F. Leroy Bond, Forest Supervisor, to District Ranger, Blue Mountain, dated December 16, 1963. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1963c Memo from F. Leroy Bond, Forest Supervisor, to Prairie City District Ranger, dated December 17, 1963. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Cousins, Art 1934 Letter from Art Cousins, Regional Fiscal Agent, to Forest Supervisor, dated February 14, 1934. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Duncan, Bonita H. 1994 Cultural Resource Site Form: Prairie City Bunkhouse, Forest Service Number H-646-1711. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Ewing, Carl 1933a Letter from Carl Ewing, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, Portland, dated May 27, 1933. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1933b Letter from Carl Ewing, Forest Supervisor, to A. P. French, Centralia, Washington, dated June 28, 1933. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1933c Letter from Carl Ewing, Forest Supervisor, to J. L. French, Susanville, California, dated July 3, 1933. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Gelernter, Mark 1999 A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context. University Press of New England, Hanover and London. Good, Albert H. 1990 [1938] Patterns from the Golden Age of Rustic Design: Park and Recreation Structures from the 1930s. Originally published in 1938 as "Park and Recreation Structures," Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Roberts Rinehart, Lanham, Maryland. Heyn, P. A. 1967 Memorandum from P. A. Heyn, Forest Engineer, to District Ranger, Prairie City, dated November 21, 1967. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Hill, Edwin G. 1990 In the Shadow of the Mountain: The Spirit of the CCC. Washington State University Press, Pullman, Washington. Johns, Tony 2010 Personal communication with Prairie

City Ranger District recreation specialist, Tony Johns, Prairie City Ranger Station, Prairie City, Oregon, May 22. Lemon, Darren M. 2010 Personal communication with Darren M. Lemon, Malheur National Forest, John Day, via email dated March 18. Lindsas, L. I. 1962 Letter from L. I. Lindsas, Chief Counsel, to F. Leroy Bond, Forest Supervisor, Malheur National Forest, dated August 16, 1962. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Lindsay, Ernest 1935 Prairie City, Oregon, Ranger Station, Whitman National Forest [photograph]. Dated November 1935. Electronic document, [http://oregondigital.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=?gwilliams&CISOPTR](http://oregondigital.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=?gwilliams&CISOPTR), accessed June 23, 2010. The Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Libraries. Loring, J. Malcolm 1958a Memo from J. Malcolm Loring, Forest Supervisor, to Mrs. Amba G. Morgan, John Day, dated January 31, 1958. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1958b Memo from J. Malcolm Loring, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, dated April 9, 1958. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Malheur National Forest (MNF) 1930-1960 Investment Record Malheur N. F., Transfer File, Permanent. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1943 Site Plan Prairie City Ranger Station. Mapped August 6, 1933. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1955 Memo from Supervisor, Malheur, to Regional Forester, dated January 26, 1955. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1957 Site Plan Prairie City Ranger Station. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1964 Site Development Plan, Prairie City Service Compound. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1980 Site Development Plan Prairie City Ranger Station. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1988 Prairie City Ranger District Modular Office Siting Plan Alternative "C". On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1991 Prairie City R.S. Office Addition [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Miller, David E. 2005 *Toward a New Regionalism: Environmental Architecture in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle and London. Oord, A. G. 1956 Memorandum from A. G. Oord, District Ranger, Prairie City, to Supervisor, Malheur National Forest, dated April 18, 1956. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Stone, J. Herbert 1955 Memo from J. Herbert Stone, R-6, Avon Denham, Acting, to Forest Supervisor, dated March 4, 1955. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Thomas, Suzanne Crowley 1994 Forest Service Determination of Effect: Bunkhouse Door Improvement Project. Report Number 646-94/127. Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Throop, Elizabeth Gail 1979 *Utterly Visionary and Chimerical: A Federal Response to the Depression, an Examination of Civilian Conservation Corps Construction on National Forest System Lands in the Pacific Northwest*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of History, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon. 1984 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form: USDA Forest Service Administrative Buildings in the States of Oregon and Washington Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) 1928 Two Room Station [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1957 Warehouse & Office Building [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1958a Site Plan Prairie City Ranger Station [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1958b 60' x 30' Equipment Storage Building [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1963 Warehouse, Sections & Elevations, Plan No. 603 CP [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. 1987 Prairie City Dock Cover Remodel [architectural drawings]. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon. Waha, A. O. 1933 Letter from A. O. Waha, Assistant Regional Forester, to Forest Supervisor, John Day, dated June 12, 1933. On file, Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon.