

File

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Camp Rhododendron

other name/site number: Camp Rhododendron Recreational Historic District

2. Location

street & number: off U.S. 48, 8 miles east of Morgantown, W.V.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Morgantown

vicinity: X

state: WV county: Monongalia code: 061 zip code: 26505

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-state

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	objects
	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of relate property listing: Coopers Rock State Forest
Historic Resources

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

W. W. D. S.

Signature of Certifying Official

March 26, 1996

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register _____

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register

_____ removed from the National Register _____

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of
Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Recreation and Culture

Sub: Outdoor Recreation

Current : Recreation and Culture

Sub: State Forest

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

See Below

Other Description: Other: NPS Rustic Architecture

Materials: foundation Sandstone roof Wood shingle;
walls Wood-log asphalt shingle
Stone other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: State.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Entertainment/Recreation
Landscape Architecture
Conservation

Period(s) of Significance: 1936 - 1941-42

Significant Dates : 1936 1939 1940

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Civilian Conservation Corps
Camp Rhododendron

State significance of property, and justify criteria, considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet. See Section H, pp. 1-3.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ 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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: West Virginia History and Regional
Collection, W.V.U.

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 91 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>602220</u>	<u>4387780</u>	B	<u>17</u>	<u>602120</u>	<u>4387640</u>
C	<u>17</u>	<u>601620</u>	<u>4387830</u>	D	<u>17</u>	<u>601000</u>	<u>4388380</u>
				E	<u>17</u>	<u>601460</u>	<u>4388460</u>

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Pamela Ball Redmond/Historian

Organization: Coopers Rock Foundation Date: December 15, 1990

Street & Number: 625 Brandon Street Telephone: 304-296-3013

City or Town: Morgantown State: WV ZIP: 26505

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The Camp Rhododendron Recreational Historic District, located within the Coopers Rock State Forest near Morgantown, Monongalia County, W.V., consists of ten related buildings, structures, and objects clustered within a heavily forested tract above a deep gorge. The nearby gigantic Coopers Rock, the overlook, and the valley present one of West Virginia's most spectacular panoramas.

The work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Camp Rhododendron was constructed between 1936 and 1942. Most of the resources within the complex were finished by 1941. They are designed in the Rustic architectural style, typical of the Depression - era CCC. Construction involves rough-hewn log and sandstone, load-bearing masonry. The buildings are essentially symmetrical in overall composition and reflect a close relationship with the landscape. Connecting the district's sections, buildings, and structures are stone pathways, low walls, and occasional fences that remain in their original natural settings within old-growth vegetation.

Inventory of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

1. Pumphouse - C.

The stone pumphouse is one story high, and made of cut sandstone and wood. There is blacksmithed hardware including latch, hinges, and window bars. The windows are arch shaped with arch shaped wood shutters. The window bars are located underneath the wood shutters. The roof material is asphalt shingles (green color). The wood door has vertical boards and blacksmithed decorative hinges, and latch. The decorative design on the latch & hinges is reminiscent of hobnail glass patterns.

The pumphouse sits in one of the main picnic areas, approximately 200 feet off, to the right, of the main entrance road. Minimal change has occurred since it was built in the late 1930's. The original wood shake roofing material was replaced with green asphalt shingles during the mid-1970s.

2. Robert Fechner Monument- C.

This monument, dedicated to Robert Fechner, is constructed of cut sandstone. The dimensions of the monument are 10 feet high by 6 feet wide. The hand-chiseled words on the front are as follows:

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IN MEMORY
OF ROBERT FECHNER
DIRECTOR OF CCC
1933 - 1939

The monument has the appearance of a large rock boulder with an attached sign surface, but is all one piece of sandstone. It displays a massive appearance.

The Robert Fechner Monument has not been changed by man, but by nature. The chiseled lettering has lost some of its depth, due to constant exposure to the elements (primarily air pollution). Luckily, the monument has not suffered from vandalism (to date).

3. Information Booth - C.

The building is symmetrical in composition; one story high, and is constructed of sandstone, and logs. The logs are used as rafters, and support posts. The structure measures 11 feet wide by 10 feet long, thus it is almost square, but not quite. The rectangular structure is open on the back side, to allow the person manning the booth to walk in and out. The unenclosed structure has a stone counter, and two half log seats on the inside, on the left and right sides.

Originally the structure had wood shake roof material, but now has green asphalt shingles. The shingles were added in the mid-1970s.

The only change in physical appearance since it was built in the late 1930s, is the absence of two signs. A wood sign with the words "Information Booth" used to hang from the roof on the front side. Additionally, there used to be a small sign that told the hours of operation. The handmade iron hooks for the hours of operation sign are still intact.

4. Pavilion No. 1 - C.

Pavilion No. 1 is symmetrical in composition and features three feet high sandstone walls, with log support beams that measure 4 1/2 feet in diameter. The logs appear to be poplar. The sandstone roof support columns, found on all four corners, are massive in appearance. The shed-type roof slopes down dramatically to meet these massive, sandstone support columns.

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The low sandstone walls surrounding the perimeter of the structure provide shelter from the elements for the picnic participants, but at the same time open up the beauty of the outdoor environment to the participants inside. The unenclosed design of the structure, personifies the 'one-with-nature' design principles of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The interior of the pavilion features a massive stone fireplace, with a stone mantelpiece. The interior floor surface is constructed of sandstone.

The overall dimensions of this structure are: 55' length, and 38' width. The pavilion sits on a site that is occupied by another pavilion directly across from it. The pavilions are joined by a beautiful flagstone walkway that also travels back out to the original parking lot area, and also travels down to the Overlook area. This walkway arrangement gives the feeling of a plaza.

The historic appearance of this structure would be little changed from present day appearance. The picnic tables inside the pavilion have been replaced since the 1930s, and the roofing material was changed from wood shake to green asphalt shingle material, during the mid-1970s. Several roof support logs are showing evidence of rotting on the very ends.

5. Pavilion No. 2 - C.

Pavilion No. 2 is symmetrical in composition and features three feet high sandstone walls, with log support beams that measure 4 1/2 feet in diameter. The sandstone roof support columns, are massive in appearance. The sandstone support columns are 12' high. This pavilion (No. 2) almost mirrors the pavilion across the plaza from it (Pavilion No. 1). When measuring them both, I found a slight difference in size.

Pavilion No. 2 measures 54' long by 39' wide. Thus, these buildings only show approximately one inch difference in size. This second pavilion features a fireplace that is also different than No. 1. The fireplace is made of the same sandstone, but features a log mantelpiece instead of stone. The floor is the same as No.1, and is constructed of sandstone.

This structure has the same 'open air' feeling as does No. 1. The unenclosed design truly does bring the outdoors inside.

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The historic appearance has changed little since the 1930s. The picnic tables have been replaced over the years, and the roof was replaced in the 1970s. Originally the roofing material was wood shake, but the replacement roof is asphalt shingles. Lightning struck this building several years ago, and one log had to be replaced. (According to Superintendent Kerns.)

6. Overlook/Walkway - C.

The Overlook/Walkway sits on a foundation of natural sandstone rock formations. The Walkway is constructed of sandstone support pylons, and locust logs. The Walkway railings approach the Walkway from both the North and South directions curving along the sandstone rock formations; then straighten out to form the main body of the Walkway. The steps coursing down to the Walkway are one-half replacement of concrete (top of steps), and one-half original sandstone step (second set that align with the Walkway planking boards) that were shot and drilled. The Walkway planking boards have been replaced recently. (Originally, they were oak planking boards, but now are made with pressure-treated wood boards.)

The Walkway is now reinforced with a steel I-beam that was installed by the DNR Forest Department in 1970. Originally, there were locust logs used for the main support reinforcement under the Walkway. A combination of increased foot traffic over the years, and deterioration of locust logs, due to weather exposure, necessitated the use of a stronger reinforcement system. (Currently, the C.R.S.F. has a annual visitation rate of approximately 400,000 +.)

The Overlook is perched on top of a magnificent ancient sandstone rock formation that looks down on the Cheat River Gorge. The gorge is approximately 1,000 feet below. The overlook Railings are made of locust logs. They are replaced, when needed, with locust logs. The Overlook railings are supported by sandstone pylons (approximately 10' apart). The overlook rock has a small rhododendron shrub growing up through the rock surface. (Evidently, it has been growing for many years, but due to lack of water, thus poor root system it remains very small for its age.) You can view parts of Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania from the Overlook.

The physical appearance has changed little since it was constructed in 1937. The hardwood trees and rhododendrons get larger every year. The "graffiti" carved on the Overlook slowly increases from year to year, but luckily seems to be a "fad" that is dying out. Several of the cap stones are missing from the sandstone pylons. Additionally, there are two metal mechanical viewers mounted into the Overlook rock formation. The date of their installation is unknown at this time.

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7. Concession Stand - C.

The Concession Stand is symmetrical in composition, one story high, and constructed of logs, and sandstone. This building is shaped in an almost exaggerated T-shape. The front of the building is an open air, almost pavilion like design. This open air front extension now houses two pavilion picnic areas with picnic benches. The back of the building is a one-story, two-room log cabin. Originally, this cabin was used to house a staff member. It is now used for activities connected to the concession business.

This building measures 62' wide, and 45' deep. Massive logs create the pavilion areas. These massive log roof supports and rafters are in solid, non-rotted condition. Some of the log railings were removed along the front side, when the 1950s concession counter space was installed. (I imagine this was done to prevent massive traffic jams from occurring when the tourists are buying their hot dogs and souvenirs.)

8. Fire Warning Sign - C.

The Fire Warning Sign, dedicated to the prevention of forest fires, is constructed of cut sandstone. There are large sandstone pylons that act as a base to the sculpture. The face of the piece is chiseled sandstone.

The fire prevention message begins with the line, "Fire is the greatest enemy of the beauty and usefulness of each forest." The last line reads, "You have a share of each state forest, protect it." A warning about careless behavior of campfires is also chiseled on the sculpture.

The Fire Warning Sign is 8' wide, and 6' 6" high. (This dimension figure includes the base.) It was carved in 1938. (The date is carved on the bottom.)

The sculpture has not been changed by man, but by nature. The chiseled lettering is slightly worn, due to weather exposure and air pollution. To date, the piece has not been damaged by vandals.

The backside of this piece is interesting. Evidently, the person who carved it made a mistake in his lettering, because the chiseled words were started on the back side.

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9. Pavilion No. 3 - C.

Pavilion No. 3 is located in the area of the C.R.S.F. section known as the Rock City Trail area. This area is located to the NW, approximately 3/4 of a mile from the Concession Stand. The Rock City road leading to this area was constructed by Camp Rhododendron. This CCC constructed road bed displays drain, culvert, & retaining walls, which were all constructed of cut sandstone.

The Pavilion No. 3 sits uphill from the Rock City Trail Road. This pavilion is smaller than Pavilion No. 1 and 2. It measures approximately 40' in length and 25' 6" in depth. This pavilion has a more enclosed feeling than No. 1 and 2. Three feet high log walls enclose most of the building, although there are three entrances to the structure.

The massive, cut stone chimney and fireplace, create the focal point for both the interior and exterior. Stone steps grace both the front and left side of the structure.

10. Trail Trail Chalet - C.

Rock City Trail Chalet is located on the Rock City Trail, and is approximately one-half mile from the Pavilion No. 3. You cannot reach this structure by a main road. The trail is made for foot traffic only. (Cross-country skiers also use this trail in the winter time.)

This structure reminds one of a chalet. The roof sweeps sharply down in a A-shape. The front of the structure has a large, open doorway. The doorway is flanked on both sides by small rooms, that appear to be for wood storage. The back of the structure is almost butted-up against a rock formation that is covered with old-growth rhododendrons. The back has two window openings, that originally had coverings of some type. (Probably wood frames with wood window covers.)

Rock City Trail Chalet was obviously built for shelter from the elements. But yet it was not totally enclosed; i.e. open air front opening. It has a stone foundation, and log walls. There is a massive stone chimney and fireplace that has been vandalized over the years with graffiti.

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NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Two toilet buildings, recently constructed (see sketch map), are noncontributing resources within the historic district.

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Significance

The resources within the Camp Rhododendron Recreational Historic District, constructed by the CCC, represent an integral part of the functioning of the Coopers Rock State Forest park. They were constructed in the Depression-era Rustic style of architecture which reflected a close relationship with the landscape. The period of construction is from about 1936 to 1941-42.

The CCC made a lasting impression on the landscape of America. The development of state parks and forests during this time still affect recreation patterns and conservation of America's natural resources.

The district's buildings, structures, and objects are significant under National Register Criteria A and C. Criterion A significance is met through association with the Depression-era CCC program. This period in our national, state, and local history affected the economic, social, and conservation patterns in our country. The buildings are significant under Criterion C because they embody the style and qualities that represent CCC's Rustic 'one-with-nature' design. They continue to display integrity of location and setting.

During President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first 100 days in office, "New Deal" programs were developed to try and put the country back on its collective feet. The W.P.A. (Works Projects Administration); F.D.I.C. (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation); N.Y.A. (National Youth Administration); T.V.A. (Tennessee Valley Authority), and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) were all created as New Deal agencies.

The Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, was Roosevelt's personal favorite. It would become his "pet" project over the next nine years.

Roosevelt was spiritually a 'man-of-the earth'. He subscribed to the Jeffersonian ideal of man being best when one-with-nature. Roosevelt's personal philosophy coupled with the fact that the U.S. was succumbing to landscape destruction, helped create the CCC. Additionally, Roosevelt was a friend and ardent follower of Gifford Pinchot, who was the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. The CCC program seems a logical result of these facts.

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All of the CCC-constructed resources share one thing in common: rugged design that was known as "Rustic" style architecture. The resources all remain in their original natural settings, and reflect a 'one-with-nature' styling. This nonintrusive style was accomplished by use of natural buildings materials (stone and timber), low silhouette with horizontal lines, and close attention to proportion.

Since these facilities were basically crafted by hand with minimal assistance from modern machinery, they share a somewhat crude, handmade, but well crafted appearance.

Many landscaping elements were completed during the 1936-1942 period as well. These included decorative stone walls; stone retaining walls; stone drainage ditches; stone culverts; stone reservoir; stone fountains; stone fireplaces; stone steps, and stone walkways. These elements are quite significant because they exemplify Rustic architecture by virtue of their complementary and aesthetic placement among natural features of the earth. Further, the setting and buildings were, and remain, attractive to tourists who visited the forest for recreation purposes, including hiking, walking, and picnicking.

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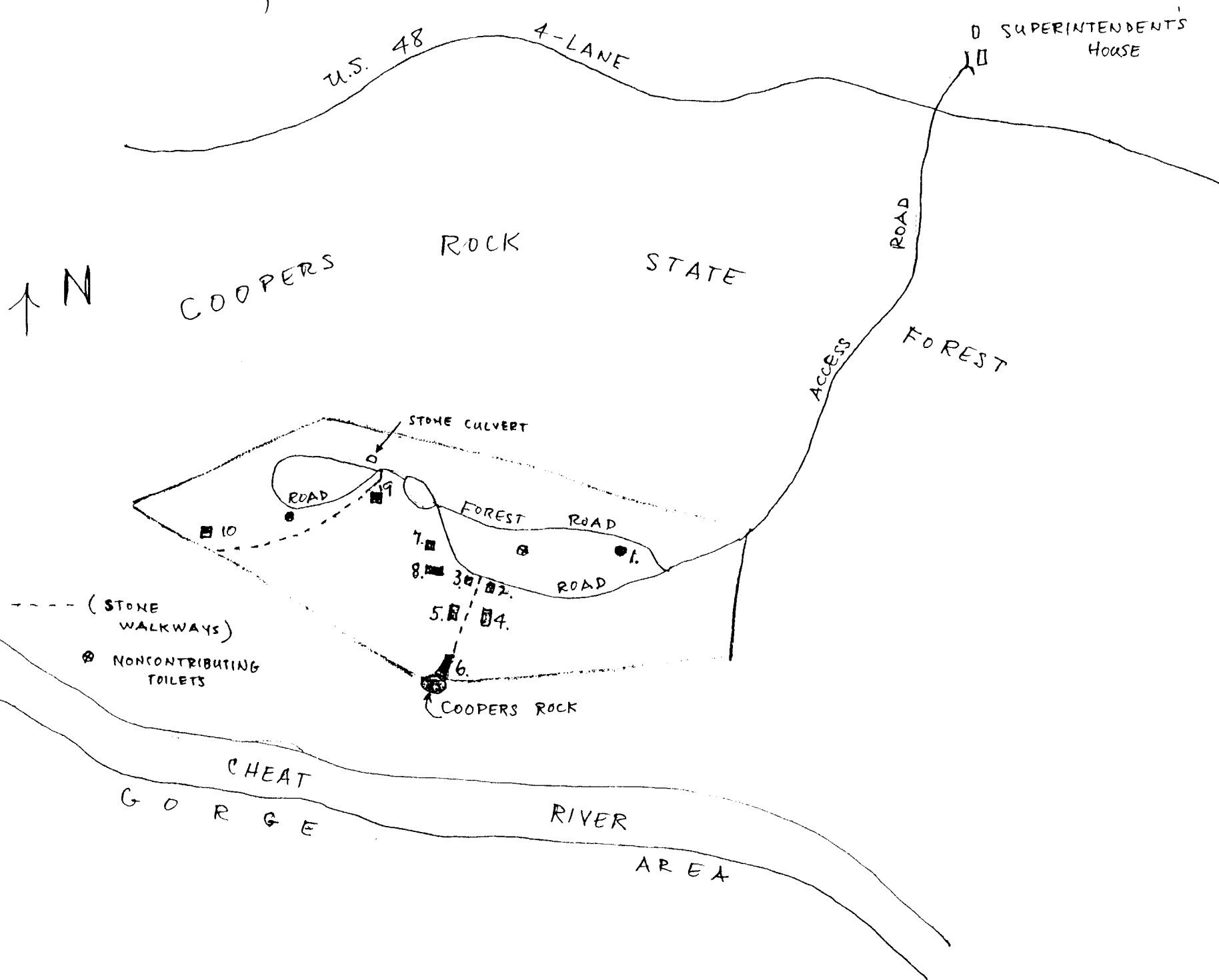
Verbal Boundary Description

The Camp Rhododendron Recreational Historic District is a mile-long complex located at the south end of the Coopers Rock State Forest access road. Its southern and southwestern boundary is formed by the precipice of the Cheat River gorge. Along this cliff line is the forest's most famous sight, the enormous Cooper's Rock, which is an integral part of the nominated district. Beginning at Cooper's Rock the boundary runs 1600 ft. S.E., thence N.E. 600 ft. and crossing the access road, thence beginning 100ft. N.E. of the access road in a straight line running N.W. 3200 ft., thence in a straight line S.W. 1400 ft. to the canyon rim, thence in a straight line 2600 ft. S.E. to the point of beginning at Coopers Rock.

Boundary Justification

The nominated resources comprise a recognizable, cohesive collection of Rustic forest-related architecture within which paved roads, paths, and scenic overlooks provide unifying elements. The nominated resources are clustered in this portion of Coopers Rock State Forest and are not found in other portions of the forest between State Route 48 and Coopers Rock.

CAMP RHODODENDRON RECREATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
MORGANTOWN VIC., WEST VIRGINIA









IN MEMORY
OF
ROBERT FECHNER
DIRECTOR CCC
1933-1939

