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**National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

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This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission       Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated hisyoric context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Prehistoric Utilizations of Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, ca. 10,500 B. C. - 1200 A.D.

**C. Form Prepared by**

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

<i>Evan D. DeBlois</i> Signature and title of certifying official	Preservation Officer	<i>3/30/93</i> Date
Forest Service	<i>William G. Turner</i>	<i>4/13/93</i>
State or Federal agency and bureau		

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

<i>Janet E. Townsend</i> Signature of the Keeper	<i>3 June 1993</i> Date of Action
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## **E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

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Prehistoric Utilizations of the Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, ca. 10,500 B. C. - 1200 A.D.

### Introduction

Archaeological study of the Allegheny Plateau highlands region in West Virginia has been limited. Various historical factors have lead to this situation, including Euroamerican cultivations practices which tended to lead to discovery of sites in cultivated bottomlands, the restriction of major transportation routes primarily to the larger valleys, the problems of travel in the highly dissected plateau region, the great difficulty of survey in very rough terrain with poor surface visibility, the presence of highly visible large prehistoric sites (e.g. mounds) in the bottomlands, and even the fact that archaeologists have tended to be based in population centers in larger valleys. Limited study has in turn led to a limited understanding of prehistoric utilization and occupation of the region.

Recent work in the region, much of it performed in connection with proposed ground-disturbing activities (e. g. McMichael 1965) or as part of land-managing agencies' ongoing cultural resources management responsibilities (e.g. Gardener & Barse 1989, 1990; Robertson et. al. 1990), as well as on-going site recordation has led to the identification of a large number of sites. However, much of this work has been at the site location level, and has not led to determination of date or site function for many sites. Some sites have been tested, revealing a rather long history of prehistoric utilization (at least Middle Archaic through Late Woodland), and an apparent wide variety of site types. It is clear that our understanding of prehistory in this region can be considerably refined and expanded. For a number of reasons, prehistorically utilized rockshelters are a key link in our understanding of the prehistory of the area, with the potential to provide certain types of data that are unlikely to be found at other types of sites.

### Natural Environment

The upper Gauley River basin lies within the Allegheny Plateau highlands, west of the Allegheny Front. The drainages of the Williams and Cranberry Rivers and that of the Gauley River above the Cherry River make up the upper basin.

Geologically, the region is an uplifted peneplane, with stream erosion following the uplift having formed a highly dissected landscape with a dendritic drainage pattern (Fenneman 1938, Churchill & Tryon 1982). Local relief is fairly great, with differences between valley bottoms and ridgetops being 1200 -1500 feet. Valleys are very narrow, and V- shaped. As a result, streams have formed only small, scattered floodplains in a few locations. The valley sides are very steep in slope, ranging between 14 and 40 degrees (Reger 1920) with some slopes measured at up to 60 degrees (Hotopp & Barse 1991).

The ridgetops and uplands of the upper Gauley basin are dominated by sandstones of the Kanawha Formation of the Pottsville Group. The sandstones of the New River Formation of the Pottsville Group is

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stratified immediate below the Kanawha Formation, and appears on the lower walls of larger valleys. Toward the eastern end of the basin, the shales and sandstones of the Bluestone, Princeton and even Hinton Formations of the Mauch Chunk Group are evident in lower valley walls and valley bottoms. The Kanawha Group (or perhaps a member of the group known as the Homewood Sandstone (Hotopp & Barse 1991:7) forms a highly erosion-resistant capstone on ridgetops, often forming cliffs where it outcrops. As the softer underlying sandstone erodes and falls away, overhangs are formed, which can form rockshelters. Large overhangs occasionally break off and slide down the steep valley sides, coming to rest at lower elevations (sliders). These can also form rockshelters.

The upper Gauley basin lies between two primary sources of lithic raw material which are known to have been utilized by prehistoric peoples. Kanawha Black Chert occurs in a shale layer at the base of the Homewood Sandstone member of the Kanawha Sandstone. The occurrence of the chert in the shale layer is restricted to an area over 30 miles to the west of the Gauley River basin. The Hillsdale Chert of the Hillsdale Limestone member of the Greenbrier Limestone is known to outcrop at Mill Point (Brashler & Lesser 1990, Lesser 1990), which lies about 20 miles to the east of the Gauley River basin.

The soils in the the upper Gauley River basin are thin, sandy loams which formed in situ from the underlying sandstone parent material. These soils are generally weakly developed. In addition, intensive lumbering activity involving clear-cutting has resulted in massive erosion of soils from ridgetops and valley sides.

The area is currently covered primarily with a secondary mixed hardwood forest, including oaks, hickory, tulip poplar, black cherry, maple and beech. The understory contains rhododendron and mountain laurel, although the thickets appear to be rather young. A variety of nuts would have been available prehistorically, both for human consumption and as food for game. A wide variety of other edible plant species occur in the area, including large amounts of cranberries at Cranberry Glades.

The fauna in the area are plentiful. Deer are probably the main large mammal resource. Black bear are present. Smaller species include raccoon, squirrels, fox, various game birds and a multitude of chipmunks. Streams in the basin are known to contain sizable populations of trout.

Historic Landuse and it Effects on Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

The area has been subject to historic utilization since the early 1800's. Since flat places suitable for homesites were few and far between, most of them were occupied at one time or another during the historic period

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(A. Fletcher, pers. comm. 1992). Some of these same locations have since been put to use by the Monongahela National Forest.

The forests covering the majority of the upper Gauley River basin have been intensively exploited in the past. Due to the thin, easily erodible nature of the soils, any log practice which resulted in exposure of large amounts of soil was damaging. As a result, ridgetops and valleys sides were highly eroded, and open sites in these areas were seriously deflated (Hotopp & Barse 1991). Some of this erosion has created deep colluvial deposits in certain rockshelters.

Rockshelters themselves have seen historic use. The most common practice was to use them as stores for equipment, as "machine sheds" or animal shelters. One rock shelter on Craig Run is known to have served as a stable for a donkey which was employed in the locust post industry. Apparently less common was use of rockshelters to hide stills. Historically, rockshelters have been used as shelters, from transient hunters or fishermen to the extent of one near Adkins Rockhouse Run, which reportedly had some type of structure built onto and served as a house (A. Fletcher pers. comm. 1992). A number of the shelters on the forest have suffered vandalism, apparently at the hands of looters.

Although historic use of rockshelters can damage the prehistoric components (as in vandalism), this is not always the case. Relatively non-intrusive use may simply cap the prehistoric levels. Perhaps the best documented example of a rockshelter in which historic use did not damage prehistoric components is Meadowcroft, which had documented historic use from the Colonial period through Budweiser cans (Adavasio, pers. comm.).

Previous Archaeological Research

There are a number of archaeological studies from surrounding areas which provide comparative data for studies conducted on rockshelters in the Gauley Ranger District. McMichael has done a survey of Nicholas County which includes data on 80 archaeological sites, including 30 rockshelters. These sites ranged in age from Middle (or perhaps Early) Archaic through Late Woodland. One rockshelter tested as part of that study was the basis for the definition of the Buck Garden phase of Late Woodland (McMichael 1985). Extensive excavations at Green Sulphur Springs, to the south of the Gauley Ranger District, have provided the basis for refinement of McMichael's Kanawha Tradition, and for the definition of the Schoolyard phase of Late Woodland (Henderson 1986, Ison et. al. 1985, Railey and Henderson 1986). There are also two broad areal surveys which can provide important useful data (Fitzgibbons et. al. 1980, Fuerst 1981).

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Brashler and Lesser of the Monongahela National Forest have done a number of studies of the upland archaeology of the region. Their work has focused primarily on lithic scatters (Brashler 1984; Lesser and Brashler 1987) and on utilization of lithic resources, particularly the Greenbrier chert, which outcrops to the east of the Gauley Ranger District (Brashler and Lesser 1985, 1990; Lesser 1988). Similar studies were carried out near Spruce Knob by John Milner & Associates (Robertson et. al. 1990). These studies indicated that upland lithic scatters represent the material remains of numerous functionally diverse activities. They represent settlement types ranging from temporary hunting stands to upland base camps. However, these studies also indicated that open sites tend to be severely deflated, as noted above, thereby reducing the information which can be derived from such sites regarding changes in subsistence practices, site function, and even raw material use.

Archaeological research in the immediate area has been limited. Much of what has occurred has been site recording by Forest Service personnel, either as a result of archaeological surveys in connection with proposed timber sales or other undertakings (campground construction, etc.) or of sites observed by Forest Service personnel in the course of other duties. This work has indicated that there are a large number of prehistoric archaeological sites present on the the Gauley Ranger District, and that they are of a variety of types and cultural affiliations, and lie in diverse topographic settings.

Three rockshelters were tested in a limited fashion by Dorsey (1987). Two of the shelters contained small features with associated ceramics, one of which also contained two projectile points (Chesser Notched and Levanna). Both of these features were Late Woodland. The third shelter contained large amounts of rockfall, but did reveal a projectile point and debitage.

Recently a survey was carried out in the Red Oak Knob area, which located 19 prehistoric open occupational loci and 20 potential rockshelters (Gardener & Barse 1989, 1990). The open sites dated from Middle Archaic through Late Woodland, with the majority of datable material from the Late Archaic. Subsequently eight of these rockshelters, as well as two others known from Forest Service site recording activities, were tested (Hotopp & Barse 1991). The results of that work form the basis of this submission.

Types of Archaeological Properties

Rockshelters appear to have been important elements in the prehistoric utilization of the Allegheny Plateau uplands. Because of historical land use patterns, which have led to the deflation due to clear-cutting or the disturbance through re-occupation of many open air sites, their importance to our ability to understand the

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prehistoric utilization of the area is even greater. It has been said that rockshelters may provide "the only cultural resources with relatively intact deposits" in "the total universe of sites in upland settings" (Hotopp & Barse 1991:146).

Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District are known to have been utilized prehistorically from the Middle Archaic through the Late Woodland (6000 B.C.-1200 A.D.). There are some indications that the Laurel Run rockshelter may have been utilized during the Early Archaic (8000-6000 B. C.), and Paleo-Indians are known to have utilized ridgetops and uplands in West Virginia, and to have utilized rockshelters, so Early Archaic and Paleo-Indian materials are not unthinkable.

The erosion which creates rockshelters in the first place continues, often at a fairly slow and constant pace. This creates a steady rain of sediment onto the living floor of the shelter, which leads to a certain degree of stratification of deposits in cases where a shelter was occupied repeatedly or for a long period of time. More abrupt, and definite, separation of levels can result from rockfalls. In either case, stratified deposits are invaluable tools for the archaeologist attempting to understand the prehistory of a region. Even in the absence of materials which can be dated absolutely, such deposits allow for relative dating, for the identification of diagnostic artifacts, and for the development of artifact chronologies through seriation. These tools, in turn, can allow single component sites to be dated relatively. At least two of the rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger district are known to contain stratified deposits, one of which was the first such excavated in the local area.

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## **F. Associated Property Types**

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I. Name of Property Type Rockshelter

### **II. Description**

A rockshelter is any sheltered area formed by a rock overhang. They generally have exposed rock back walls, and frequently sheltered on one or both sides. They are generally open at the front. The floor area utilized may well extend beyond the dripline, but is usually confined to relatively flat ground.

For the purposes of this submission, rockshelters can be divided into two subtypes, major and minor. The characteristics of major rockshelters seem to be fairly clear. Minor rockshelters seem to be much more variable. It is possible that this subtype will need to be divided further at some time in the future, but for now the state of knowledge does not warrant such division.

#### *Subtype-Major rockshelters*

Major rockshelters as a property type appear to share several physical characteristics. They are fairly large in size, with a sheltered floor area of at least 15 square meters. A flat ground surface extends some distance beyond the drip line, giving additional living space in good weather. They are located at or near a permanent source of water. They have a generally southerly exposure, ranging from southeasterly to southwesterly.

#### *Subtype-Minor rockshelters*

Minor rockshelters as a property type are far more variable in their physical characteristics. They need not be located at or near a source of water. Although southerly exposures may be more common, even northern exposures are represented. They are generally smaller in size, with a sheltered floor area of less than 15 square meters. In some cases the shelter may cover only a square meter or two. However, in some cases they can be quite large. The roofs need not be high enough to stand under. Flat ground surface beyond the drip line may be very limited. Although it is clear that many such rockshelters were utilized, and contain intact and significant remains, the patterns of this utilization are not yet clear. This subtype may require division on the basis of future research.

### **III. Significance**

Prehistorically occupied rockshelters are significant in Prehistoric Archaeology under Criteria D. These properties have the potential to contribute to our understanding of the prehistory of the region in a variety of ways. As noted in section E, above, our current understanding of the prehistory of the upper Gauley River basin is not

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well developed. We know that it has been utilized from at least the Early Archaic period until the Late Woodland period, but settlement patterning and subsistence systems are still poorly understood. Overall chronologies, both relative and absolute, can be refined. The range of archaeologically identifiable "cultures" which occur in the region needs to be understood. The range of site types and site functions need to be defined, to facilitate our understanding of the systems in which they existed.

As explained above, rockshelters may well represent the best preserved portion of the universe of sites in that portion of the Allegheny Plateau highlands. As such, they assume an even greater significance in our ability to understand the prehistory of the region. The rockshelters in the region appear to contain prehistoric deposits ranging in age from at least Early Archaic through at least Late Woodland times, often with a historic overlay. The range of site functions appears to be broad.

As a class of site, rockshelters are likely to contain preserved organic matter. This is important for several reasons. Firstly, organic artifactual material is very rarely found on open-air sites. Thus, such sites have the potential to contain the perishable portions of prehistoric toolkits which are generally not preserved, and thus greatly enhance our knowledge of prehistoric material culture. Secondly, non-artifactual organic remains can give us a direct knowledge of which of the many potential sources of food were being exploited. Thirdly, organic remains are datable through absolute methods, which is of clear importance for understanding regional and supra-regional prehistory. Lastly, even in unoccupied rockshelters, datable organic remains may be useful in refining our understanding of the paleoclimatic conditions prevailing in the region at various times.

There is a broad range of possible research questions which can be addressed through data which can be expected to occur in rockshelters. A number of them are listed below. This list is by no means exhaustive; additional topics may arise as a result of future research as well.

Can we improve our understanding of the regional chronology?

- I. Do any rockshelters on the Gauley contain datable archaeological material, and if so, from when does it date?
- II. Is there temporal patterning to locations of rockshelters in use, activity areas within shelters over time? How does such temporal patterning relate to what is known about density of settlement distribution and of open camp sites, therefore -
- III. Are some rockshelters "connected" outliers of central settlements (as determined by size variation in relation to geographic proximity and artifact similarities)

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What subsistence systems were employed and how did they vary over time and between groups?

- IV. What forms of procurement, processing and storage technology are present at rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, and is there a change through time?
- V. What types of ecofactual material are found at rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, and is there a change through time?

Did technological and subsistence strategy changes lead to changes in social organization?

- VI. How did population density vary over time on the Gauley Ranger District?
- VII. Do changes in subsistence practices correlate with evidence for increasing social differentiation (variations in personal adornment, etc.)?

Were relatively dense populations established in the region during the Late Woodland period, and if so, did the rockshelters serve as provisioning sites for those populations?

- VIII. What is the distribution and density of Late Woodland materials on the Gauley Ranger District?
- IX. What types of subsistence were practiced at the rockshelters, and could they have been supported on-site, or were other provisioning areas needed?

Generally, were there inter-societal or inter-cultural relationships (trade, raiding) and how did they change over time?

- X. To what extent are exotic materials represented in the finds?
- XI. Are specialized "war" related weapons represented in the artifact collections?
- XII. How do the rockshelters fit into the lithic procurement systems at various periods?

What factors were determinants in selection of rockshelters for occupation?

- XIII. What topographic and ecological conditions were present at occupied rockshelters during the periods of settlement?
- XIV. Is there a patterning to distribution of rockshelters selected for occupation, and does it change through time?

*Subtype-Major rockshelters*

Such large shelters have often been utilized repeatedly, and thus will contain stratified deposits which can be particularly valuable in establishing and refining relative chronologies for the region.

*Subtype-Minor rockshelters*

Minor rockshelters as a property type appear to have been far more variable in their functions. Additional research will enable us to determine the range of site types, and their dates, and thus to construct a much more detailed understanding of prehistoric utilization of the region than could be gained from major rockshelters alone. Each shelter may be only a tiny fragment of the mosaic, but put together, the overall picture can emerge.

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**IV. Registration Requirements**

In order to qualify for listing under Criterion D, a rockshelter must have been utilized prehistorically. Except as specified, it must contain some intact prehistoric deposits. Complete integrity of all deposits is not necessary; limited disturbance of a portion of the shelter does not automatically destroy the potential to contribute to our understanding of local and regional prehistory, although it does damage that potential. A rockshelter which does not contain prehistoric deposits will also qualify for listing if it did contain such deposits, and if such deposits were totally removed through a program of scientific archaeological excavation which resulted in the recovery of significant information concerning the prehistoric occupation of the region.

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## **G. Geographical Data**

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### **The Gauley Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia.**

The Gauley Ranger District's boundaries are approximately as follows: from a point on the MNF boundary north of Three Forks of the Gauley the GRD boundary follows the Forest boundary, running irregularly west along the Gauley Divide toward Excelsior, thence irregularly southwest to Gauley Mills, thence south along the Gauley River to its confluence with the Cherry River, thence southeast along the Cherry River to a point north of Fenwick, thence southwest to the juncture of Routes 20/39 and 32, thence south along Route 32 to the end, thence irregularly south to a point south of Lile, thence irregularly southeast along Beech Ridge to Job Knob, thence irregularly southeast past Grassy Knob, Low Gap and Cold Knob to Twin Sugars Mountain, thence straight northeast to a point north of a church on Boggs Run, thence north-northeast to a point on Hills Creek west of Round Mountain, thence southeast, northeast and northwest to include Round Mountain, thence northeast to the Cranberry Mountain Visitors Center. At this point the district boundary leaves the Forest boundary, and follows the boundary of the Cranberry Wilderness for a while, running irregularly north along Routes 55/150 to the point where they cross the Williams River. Thence the boundary runs northwest along Forest Road 86 to the junction with FR 135, thence irregularly north along FR 135 to a point on the south end of Turkey Mountain. At this point the boundary leaves the road, running irregularly north-northwest past Three Forks of Gauley to the point of beginning. Private inholdings within the Gauley Ranger District of the Monongahela NF are not included in this Multiple Property Submission. Only Federally-owned lands are included.

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## **H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

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Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The multiple property listing of the Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest had its impetus in the ongoing cultural resource recording program of the Gauley Ranger District and in a 1989 survey of the Red Oak Opportunity Area. This survey (1989, 1990) located a number of rockshelters. A number of additional shelters had been identified by Forest Service personnel. Ten shelters were selected for testing in 1991 (Hotopp and Barse 1991). Of these, five appeared to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The survey was by no means exhaustive, covering only a small portion of the Gauley.

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However, the site recording program, and limited testing of three other rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, indicated that there are a number of other rockshelters on the Gauley which are potentially eligible for nomination on the same basis. Given that, it was felt that a multiple property submission would be more suited to the management needs of the Monongahela National Forest than would individual nominations of the five rockshelters, providing the flexibility to nominate additional rockshelters in the future.

The initial survey (Gardener and Barse 1989,1990) located potentially occupied rockshelters on two drainages near Bishop Knob. These shelters, as well as two others known from Forest site recording activities, were carefully mapped and profiled, site grids were established, and they were tested. Materials from the sites were analyzed on the basis of known chronologies from nearby (Hotopp and Barse 1991).

The historic context was developed on the basis of the survey and testing reports (Gardener and Barse 1989, 1990; Hotopp and Barse 1991), review of the pertinent archaeological literature, interviews with Forest Service personnel (Ruth Brinker, Forest Archaeologist; Arden Fletcher, Cultural Resources Technician; and Jane Baird, Cultural Resources Technician), examination of Monongahela NF site maps and site forms, review of geological maps for the state of West Virginia (West Virginia Geologic and Economic Survey 1968) and the Gauley River Basin (McAuley 1985) and site visits. The research was conducted and the context prepared by Anne M. Jensen. Photography was carried out by Randall Wise, with supplemental photographs having been taken by William Barse during the testing of the shelters.

The two property subtypes were chosen based on the current state of knowledge. The subtype identified as "minor rockshelters" will probably be subdivided in the future as additional research takes place and our understanding of site types and settlement patterns in the region develops.

Individual site boundaries were established on the basis of surface indications, the results of sub-surface testing, and on the basis of local topographic considerations. The flat area outside the dripline and the ledge above the shelter were included in the sites on the basis of knowledge of conditions at other rockshelters.

Requirements for integrity were designed to permit inclusion of sites which contain information which will contribute to our understanding of prehistory, without eliminating sites which may have experienced a limited degree of disturbance but still contain valuable data.

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Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District, Monongahela National  
Forest

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West Virginia Geologic and Economic Survey  
1968      *Geologic Map of West Virginia.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: Cover Date Listed: 6-3-93

Property Name County State

Rockshelters on the Gauley Ranger District,  
Monogahela National Forest MPS (Cover) Nicholas/Webster WV  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Janet E. Townsend*  
Signature of the Keeper

*June 3, 1993*  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination: This Multiple Property Submission Cover is amended as follows:

Section F, Page 7: Delete the last sentence in the Registration Requirements, which reads "A rockshelter which does not contain prehistoric deposits will also qualify for listing if it did contain such deposits, and if such deposits were totally removed through a program of scientific archaeological excavation which resulted in the recovery of significant information concerning the prehistoric occupation of the region."

Note: Refer to National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, page 24, section "Completely Excavated Sites." A copy is attached.

Dr. Evan DeBlois, Forest Service Preservation Officer, was consulted on this issue and concurs with the above amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)