

WYANDOTTE COUNTY LAKE
PARK
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY
SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2009

Submitted by Kansas Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

In September-October 2009 staff of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS) conducted a comprehensive historic resources survey of all known built resources within Wyandotte County Lake Park. Field survey was conducted by SHPO survey coordinator Caitlin Meives with assistance from SHPO intern Alexis Rothenberg. Under the direction of Cultural Resources Division Director/Deputy SHPO Patrick Zollner, Meives processed the survey data and uploaded it to the SHPO's online survey database. Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, John Bower, provided access to the Lake House and associated outbuildings.

This formal survey project followed an informal survey of some of the park resources carried out by the staff of the KSHS Cultural Resources Division on September 27, 2006. Although the SHPO initiated the 2009 survey in response to concerns raised by the Friends of the Lake organization, the SHPO has in the past encouraged the Department of Parks and Recreation to hire a preservation consultant to conduct a survey of the park. The partial demolition of a historic gazebo shelter prompted the SHPO to conduct its own survey of the park.

Wyandotte County Lake Park comprises approximately 1500 acres of land. The park is organized around the perimeter of Wyandotte County Lake with park facilities located off the approximately 6.5 mile main park road, referred to as West Drive and East Drive. Both the lake and the park were created as part of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project that began in 1935. Built resources in the park consist primarily of park shelters, restrooms, and culverts and bridges, dating from the 1930s WPA project through the 1980s.

The purpose of the historic resources survey was to identify and document all known historic, non-archeological resources within the park. The report that follows summarizes the methodology and findings from that survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Historic resource surveys are conducted for a number of reasons. By providing basic information about individual structures surveys can identify several areas of importance: (1) historic resources (generally those that are 50 years or older); (2) significant resources that may be worthy of preservation; and (3) resources that may be at risk. Surveys also provide written and photographic documentation of potentially significant resources. All of this information can be incorporated into promotional and marketing activities as well as local planning efforts, including building maintenance plans and disaster preparedness.

Surveys also provide the documentation needed to determine if a single resource or a collection of resources is/are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Register of Historic Kansas Places (state register). Generally, a property must be at least 50 years old and must retain its historic integrity in order to be considered eligible for listing. Eligible properties must also have the potential to be documented as historically or architecturally significant at the local, state, or national level.¹

The survey of Wyandotte County Lake Park involved three components: (1) research of SHPO files; (2) field survey; and (3) processing and uploading of survey data to the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI), the SHPO's online survey database (kshs.org/khri).

Field Survey

A reconnaissance trip was made to Wyandotte County Lake Park in early August 2009 prior to conducting field survey. A list of historic and non-historic built resources that were visible from the park roads was gathered and each resource was assigned a survey sequence number (001-087).

Survey began at the south entrance to the park on N 91st Street and generally continued north on the main park road, along the east side of the lake, then west across the dam, and south along the west edge of the lake. Fieldwork took place over a three-day period on September 17, 18 and October 6, 2009. Except where explicit permission was given, only resources that were accessible to the general public were surveyed. Resources that did not appear to be accessible to the public were observed and photographed from an appropriate distance. John Bower, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, provided access to the Lake House grounds and the interior of the Lake House and Lake House Stables.

Field survey included collecting geographic coordinates and physical and location information; photographing each side/elevation of the resource; and drawing a site plan. Physical information included the categories present on the online KHRI survey form (architectural style, shape, materials, condition, estimated date of construction) as well as any other readily observable

¹ For more information of the National Register of Historic Places, visit the KSHS SHPO website at <http://www.kshs.org/resource/buildings.htm> or refer to National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>).

information that might be relevant, such as distinctive architectural features. Geographic coordinates were recorded using a GPS unit.²

Photographic documentation is a key component in the field survey. Using a digital SLR camera, all resources were documented with at least one ¾ view, showing the main/front elevation and a side elevation. In most cases, at least one image was captured of each elevation or side of a resource. Notable architectural features and interiors were also photographed when appropriate. All resources were photographed as high quality JPEGs.

Draft site plans were sketched with as much detail as possible, noting rooflines and window and door openings. Dimensions of the structure or object were recorded when practicable. Required site plan elements included an outline of the building footprint, a North arrow, and orientation to the road where appropriate.

Research

The SHPO has on file a number of documents relating to the history of Wyandotte County Lake Park, including a timeline spanning the years 1934-1983. Although not cited, this timeline appears to have been excerpted from county or park records. Many of the dates of construction estimated or documented on the KHRI survey forms were gleaned from the information contained in this timeline. Unfortunately, the dates of many shelters and restroom facilities are impossible to determine from the available materials. More detailed records with more specific location information or original drawings or building plans are critical to determining construction dates with any greater specificity. Most of the other research materials that have been submitted to the SHPO provide more significant documentation of the construction of the dam and its associated structures.

Data Collection

Once the field survey stage was complete, Caitlin Meives, SHPO Survey Coordinator, entered the survey data into the online survey database, KHRI. Each surveyed resource was assigned a survey sequence number (001-087) within the survey project name, *Wyandotte County Lake Park Survey 2009*. It is important to note that a single record and survey sequence number can include multiple resources, thus more than 87 actual structures were surveyed. This occurs when the primary resource possesses ancillary structures that do not necessarily merit a separate form. Also, in order to maintain the numbering system, resources that were not included in the original list and were discovered during the field survey were given a sub-number such as 001a, 001b, etc.

² Latitude and longitude coordinates were recorded in decimal degrees format using datum WGS84. Coordinates that could not be gathered in the field (such as for the Railroad Bridge) were collected at www.mapper.acme.com.

A survey record was created for each numbered resource. The KHRI system generates an inventory number for each record. Some specific resources discussed in the report that follows are keyed to this inventory number. With the exception of the dam, which had an existing record in the KHRI system, the inventory numbers follow the format '209-2xxx.' Resources were assigned an historic name following the format, "Wyandotte County Lake Park – Resource Name." In the absence of additional information, a resource was given a generic name or the name provided on the park map. The shelter numbering system used on the Wyandotte County Lake Park map (May, 1994) was maintained.

Once completed and approved by SHPO staff, all survey records will be available to the public on KHRI at ksks.org/khri. Users who register with the site and are approved by SHPO staff may also log-in to KHRI and update or add to any of the survey records. Please note, all changes are subject to SHPO review and approval.

The original full-size digital images were saved, labeled with appropriate file names, and converted to .tiff file format at KSHS. Individual site plan sketches were redrawn by hand, scanned, saved along with the corresponding images, and uploaded to KHRI. Finally, a site plan of the park, denoting the location of surveyed resources was also created. Resources on the site plans are keyed to their survey sequence number (001-087). Images and site plans are archived as .tiff files on KSHS's server.

HISTORY

Park History

Wyandotte County Lake Park began as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1935. On December 7, 1935 the WPA released the first moneys for the project (\$142,083). Construction began later that month. The earliest stages of work seem to have involved mostly clearing of land in preparation for construction. Actual work on the dam began on January 15, 1936. The dam was nearly complete when it collapsed in September 1937.³ Reconstruction did not resume until 1938. The concrete for the spillway shaft was poured in February 1941. Construction of the spillway tunnel and stilling basin began about a month later.

A chronological timeline of park history notes the completion of the dam itself by August 1941 and the construction of the wall that sits atop the dam in 1942. The WPA formally terminated its involvement in the project in 1942, leaving the completion of the park to Wyandotte County. Final work on the dam and spillway structures occurred in 1944.

Resources detailing the history of the dam construction, failure, and subsequent reconstruction are numerous and range from newspaper articles, to correspondence between Wyandotte County and the National Park Service, to historic photographs. Few of these resources, however,

³ Kansas City Journal Post, September 20, 1937

reference specific park structures other than the dam and associated spillway structures. Thus, it is difficult to determine specific dates of construction for the various park shelters, buildings, and structures. The most detailed account of park structures on file with the SHPO is the chronological timeline of park history that runs from 1934 through 1983.⁴

Using this chronological history, estimates of dates of construction can be determined for some of the park structures. The first structures mentioned are Shelter 1 (209-2084), the James P. Davis Recreation Hall (209-2086), and the Gate House/South Entrance Lodge (209-2068). Shelter 1 was completed by August 1936 and the Recreation Hall was in its final stages of construction by August 1937. According to the timeline, by June 1939, the WPA project had resulted in the construction of the Recreation Hall, seven shelters, and a nearly complete Boathouse.⁵

After termination of WPA involvement in the park project, Wyandotte County assumed responsibility for the completion of the park and park structures. Construction of park shelters, restrooms, and other park facilities continued through at least the 1960s.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overview

The 2009 survey of Wyandotte County Lake Park documented just fewer than 100 resources. Resources represent a variety of types and periods of construction however the vast majority are examples of Rustic style park architecture as interpreted from the New Deal-era through the latter half of the 20th century. Taken as a whole, the park's historic and nonhistoric resources provide a visual history of the application of Rustic design in park architecture. Park resources also illustrate the evolution of Wyandotte County Lake Park from a WPA project in the 1930s and early 1940s through the post-World War II period and into the 21st century as the park has grown and evolved to meet the needs of the public it was designed to serve.

Most park resources were found to be in generally fair or good condition, often in need of basic maintenance. Some resources, such as the Stone Bridge (209-2076) and numerous other historic stone resources, displayed evidence of significant deterioration. A few resources—the James P. Davis Recreation Hall (209-2086) and Shelter 4 (209-2147)—have received recent maintenance and/or upgrades and stand out as resources in good or excellent condition.

⁴ Although various constituents have supplied the SHPO with different copies of this document, the source of its information is undetermined at this time.

⁵ This account of the completion of seven shelter houses by June 1939 may not be reliable as only three of the shelters and two gazebos/polygonal overlook shelters that remain today appear to date from the WPA era.

Resource Types

In general, historic resources can be divided into one of five resource types, as defined by the National Park Service. These include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.⁶ Taken as a whole, Wyandotte County Lake Park can be considered a site or a district, comprised of many individual buildings, structures, and objects.

The types of individual buildings, structures, and objects documented in Wyandotte County Lake Park can be divided into seven functional categories: park shelters and restroom facilities, buildings, landscape, structures associated with the roadway, structures associated with the lake and its tributaries, and ruins.

Park shelters include the 16 open-air shelter houses and two gazebos/polygonal overlook shelters located throughout the park. Restroom facilities number approximately 18, are freestanding buildings equipped with plumbing and are generally associated with a shelter. Shelters and restrooms are generally combined with a driveway/parking area as well as other ancillary objects such as playground equipment, water pumps, and small metal barbeque grills to form a complete shelter or picnic area.⁷ Some shelter areas are also accented with stone retaining walls, decorative stone walls, or stone and log guardrails.

In contrast with the shelters, buildings are generally enclosed and contain specific park functions. They include the Recreation Hall (209-2086), the Boathouse (209-2132), the South Entrance Lodge/Gate House (209-2068), the Lake House and its associated outbuildings (209-2081, -2082, -2062, -2063), the Ranger Headquarters (209-2070), the Noxious Weeds and Chemical Sales building (209-2071), and the non-historic Schlagle Environmental Library (209-2138). Being more adaptable than an open-air shelter, uses for these buildings have evolved throughout the history of the park, often serving administrative functions.

Landscape features can be classified as both objects and structures and are designed to aesthetically or functionally enhance the park landscape. Even those resources, such as retaining walls, that possess a practical function are designed to serve a decorative purpose. Examples include retaining walls, decorative stone walls, signage, planters, stone embankments along the edge of the lake, the stone steps (209-2136), and the Archery Range (209-2114).

Structures that are associated with the park roadway include culverts, guardrails, and bridges. It should be noted that although the historic road surface is no longer extant or visible, the roadway as a whole is an important historic feature of the park. The curvilinear form of the roadway, the relatively narrow width of the road, and its path around the perimeter of the lake (with offshoots providing access to shelters or park entrances) are significant historic features that contribute to the park's overall landscape.

⁶ For more information on resource types as defined by the National Park Service, see National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>).

⁷ Although examples of mid-20th century playground equipment that may be historic remain in many of the shelter areas, in most instances these items were not specifically documented.

Lake structures are generally utilitarian structures designed for a practical or engineering purpose. They include the Dam (209-2820-02031), Spillway (209-2112), Gate Valve Building (209-2179), the Causeway (209-2182), and the Railroad Bridge (209-2180).

Finally, ruins are those resources that at one time functioned as one of the above types of resources but that have deteriorated over time so that only remnants of their original form remain. The ruins identified in this survey were limited to the North Entrance Lodge/93rd St. Entrance (209-2128) and the stone ruins located behind the Schlagle Library that may have been associated with the former Stotler House Site (209-2138). It is likely that other ruins exist in the park, particularly along the footpaths and bridle trails, which were not surveyed.

Dates of Construction

With the possible exception of what may be ruins from the former Stotler House Site, all of the historic resources identified in this survey were constructed in or after 1936 when the WPA project began. Although documented dates of construction are not available for most of the resources, physical evidence and the limited documentation provide some clues. Based on the use of materials, architectural details, and methods of construction one can deduce broad estimates for dates of construction. For example, the polygonal overlook shelters/gazebos that are constructed of rounded log timbers stand out as the original WPA structures. Resources can generally be divided into three major time periods—

- (1) those constructed by the WPA or completed in the early 1940s immediately following the WPA's termination of involvement with the park project
- (2) resources constructed during the post-World War II era, 1950-1965
- (3) nonhistoric resources constructed from 1965 through 2001

Even estimated dates of construction are not clear for some of the resources, generally because the park history timeline makes no note of them and because they do not exhibit any obvious stylistic details or construction techniques that would provide clues. The stone and log guardrails that have been constructed atop many of the stone culverts and retaining walls are the most prevalent undated resource.

Many of the shelters are also difficult to date. Shelters 2, 6, and 14 possess a form distinct from that of the WPA shelters (Shelters 3, 7, 9) and the 1950s/60s shelters (Shelters 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16). It is possible therefore that Shelters 2, 6, 14 were constructed outside of the 1950s/60s time period. While most of the culverts likely date to the WPA-era, associated guardrails constructed atop the culverts may date to a much later period. Other resources for which an estimated date of construction has yet to be determined include the former tennis courts and some of the decorative walls and retaining walls.

WPA Era – 1936-1944

Based only on physical evidence and limited documentation, approximately 18 of the resources appear to date to the WPA era. These include three shelters and the two polygonal overlook

shelters/gazebos. It is likely that most of the stone culverts associated with the park roadway date to the WPA era as well, as they would have been necessary to the construction of the roadway, which was completed by November 1939.⁸ Similarly, the four bridges also likely date from the late 1930s-early 1940s. If one includes all of the stone culverts, WPA resources number approximately 38.

Below is a list of resources that are believed to have been constructed during this time period:

Shelters 3, 7, 9
Polygonal overlook shelters (2)
North Entrance Lodge/93rd St. Entrance
South Entrance Lodge
Lake House
Lake House Stables
Lake House Outbuildings (2)
Boathouse
Davis Recreation Hall
Concrete Roadway
Stone Culverts (20)
Railroad Bridge
Stone Bridge
Concrete Bridge
Metal Bridge

Post World War II Era – 1945-1965

Shelters and restrooms represent the most common resource constructed during the post World War II era. Eight of the shelters possess a very similar, almost identical form and design. These include Shelters 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 16. Similar in form and architectural detailing to the Rustic WPA shelters, these shelters can be thought of as updated versions of the original shelters constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. All of the restroom facilities identified in the survey appear to date from the post-World War II period. Restrooms are not mentioned in the timeline of park history until 1951 when plans to build two “modern restrooms” were discussed.

Other post World War II resources include the 83rd St. Shelter and Restroom, what is currently the Ranger Headquarters, the current office for Noxious Weeds and Chemical Sales, the small picnic Bench Shelters, and the South Entrance Sign.

While most resources can be placed relatively easily into one of the three broad time periods through observation of architectural details and construction techniques, distinguishing specific, documented dates of construction for resources built during this time period is critical in assessing potential National Register eligibility. This is because this time period straddles the 50-year threshold for National Register eligibility.

⁸ Chronological history/timeline: November 30, 1939 roads were opened...**Date this was recorded or date that they opened?**

Nonhistoric – 1965-2001

The definitive non-historic resources that fall into this last period are easier to identify and are limited to two resources—the Korean Vietnam War Memorial (209-2069) and the Schlagle Environmental Library (209-2138). According to the Unified Government website, the war memorial was officially dedicated on Veterans Day in 1988. The Unified Government website also places the date of construction for the Schlagle Library in 2001.

Based on their distinct appearance, Shelters 2, 6, and 14 were likely constructed after the post-World War II resources and perhaps even into the 1980s or 1990s, however, without documentation, estimated dates of construction have not been determined. Dates of construction for the guardrails are equally ambiguous however it is likely that they were constructed after 1965.

Thus, if one considers “historic” those resources that are 50 years or older, out of 96 resources surveyed, Wyandotte County Lake Park may contain as many as 55 historic resources, or resources constructed by 1959. If one adds a buffer period of approximately five years, extending the threshold to 1964 or 1965, it is likely that the vast majority of the park’s resources could be considered historic and therefore, may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.⁹

Architectural Styles

The predominant architectural style represented in the park’s built resources is the Rustic style. Also referred to as National Park Service Rustic, CCC Rustic, WPA Rustic, and sometimes as “Parkitecture,” this style is evident in most of the park’s resources including the shelters, restrooms, buildings, and even the culverts and guardrails. Resources not classified as Rustic were listed as either “Modern/Modern Movement” (2001 Library and 1988 War Memorial) or “Not Applicable.” Not Applicable was selected for resources that do not display any type of architectural style, generally because they are utilitarian or engineered structures such as the Causeway or the Spillway structures.

As with any architectural style, the Rustic style is defined by its use of form, materials, architectural details, construction methods, building or structure types, and the building’s relationship to its surroundings. Common elements in Rustic park architecture include use of native materials such as wood and stone, blending with natural surroundings, avoidance of verticality and straight lines, natural colors, screening of structures, scaling of structures in relation to the natural environment, stone bases, battered stone walls, and the use of hand labor.

While all of the shelters, restrooms, and buildings built throughout the park exhibit some influence of the Rustic park style, those designed by the National Park Service and constructed as part of the WPA project between 1936 and 1942 stand out as excellent examples of the style,

⁹ Again, it is important to note that these numbers are broad estimates based on estimated dates of construction that have not been documented. Many resources appear to have dates of construction close to the 50-year threshold. Thus, additional research may shift the numbers significantly.

which reached its peak during the New Deal-era and was executed throughout the United States in various New Deal sponsored park projects.

Each of the following WPA resources exhibits elements of Rustic design--Shelters 3, 7, 9, Boy Scout Area Gazebo, Shelter 11 Gazebo/E Lookout Shelter, James P. Davis Recreation Hall, the Boathouse, the South Entrance Lodge/Gate House, the former North Entrance Lodge, and the Lake House and its associated outbuildings. All of these resources—even the more massive, two-story Davis Hall—possess a horizontal massing and make use of natural surrounding materials. Like the nationally recognized park architecture in the Grand Canyon, these structures were designed to blend in with and complement the natural surroundings. Thus, they have a “rustic” or rugged look to them, displaying evidence of having been constructed with hand tools.

In addition to overall form and materials, each resource also possesses specific details that characterize it as Rustic. Stone resources such as Shelter 7, the South Entrance Lodge, and the Lake House, were designed with stone bases and battered stone walls. This creates the visual effect of a structure that is anchored to its natural setting and that seems to almost have grown from it. The South Entrance Lodge, in particular, is built into the side of a small hill with the rear roof planes sloping down and the stone base extending into the hill so that the building and the hill blend into one another. The upper halves of the lodge’s exterior walls are clad in rough-hewn wood clapboards, further adding to the rustic, natural look.

The shelters and gazebos also represent excellent examples of Rustic park design with round logs, wood shingle roofs, stone bases, and the use of hand labor. According to Rustic design principles elaborated by Albert H. Good in *Patterns from the Golden Age of Rustic Design*, these structures are also appropriately situated in relation to their natural surroundings. Located off of secondary park roads, they are distanced and screened from the main park road. Another key design principle on which Good elaborates is the avoidance of “severely straight lines.”¹⁰ Although Shelters 3 and 9 are large rectangular structures, each with two broad sets of eaves, the appearance of a hard, straight eaves line is avoided through the use of log timbers that give the eaves an almost undulating appearance.

When compared with other Rustic park structures designed by the National Park Service in the 1930s, those found at Wyandotte County Lake Park clearly illustrate the core principles of Rustic park design and serve as excellent examples of New Deal-era park resources. Some of the park structures—the polygonal overlook shelters, the stone culverts—bear a striking resemblance to the photographs and plans presented in Good’s book (*see examples in Appendix*). Two of the park’s stone culverts are even featured in the publication.

Good’s book, originally published in 1938, not only elaborates on the basic design principles of park architecture but also serves as a compilation of representative examples of Rustic park design from local, county, state, and national parks across the country. The use of Rustic design principles and the similarity to other representative examples throughout the country places Wyandotte County Lake Park’s WPA structures in the larger national context of Rustic park design.

¹⁰ Albert H. Good, *Patterns from the Golden Age of Rustic Design; Parks & Recreation Structures from the 1930s* (Lanham, MD: Roberts Reinhart, 2003), page #.

Many of the WPA structures at Wyandotte also present unique interpretations of Rustic design as each structure responds to its own unique environment. Thus, the structures are not simply reproductions of other WPA designs; they fit within the context of a larger style and period yet also are unique resources whose exact interpretation cannot be found elsewhere.

With respect to the environment, one must also view the built resources within their larger physical context, as components of a designed and natural park landscape. As Good explains, “The individual building or facility must bow deferentially before the broad park plan, which is the major objective... The park plan determines the size, character, location, and use of each and every structure. Collectively, these should be properly interrelated; at the same time they must be closely and logically related to the park plan...”¹¹ Thus, the built structures—the shelters, the buildings, the bridges—are but single elements that, along with the roadways, the lake, and the natural features, contribute to a larger park setting. Taken outside of this context, as solitary structures, they lose some significance.

The non-WPA era resources, which were generally constructed between 1945 and 1965, represent a modern interpretation of Rustic park architecture. These structures maintain many of the elements common in Rustic style park design with slight modifications in the use of materials and construction methods. Common modifications include the use of concrete for foundations, the use of various types of wood siding as external cladding, use of what are likely mass-produced materials, and the use of metal bolts in place of wooden pegs. Typical Rustic elements that are maintained from the WPA structures include exposed rafter tails and roof beams, use of wood and local stone, and amongst the shelters, a similar overall form. Thus, using modified techniques, the later park structures continue to convey a rustic or rugged feeling and as such appear to have been designed with some sensitivity towards the natural surroundings and the existing park structures.

Shelters and restrooms constitute the most prevalent post-World War II resources. As discussed above, most of the shelters fall into one of two categories—Shelters 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 16, which are long rectangular structures similar in form to the rectangular WPA shelters (Shelters 3 and 9); and Shelters 2, 6, and 14, which are more square in shape, are completely open on the gable ends, and do not possess “kitchens” or interior stone grills and chimneys. The rectangular shelters can be seen as modern versions of Shelters 3 and 9. While maintaining the rectangular plan form with centered openings, large stone kitchen, interior benches, exposed rafter tails, and wood shingle roofs, these shelters also introduce some changes. Most obvious is the use of squared wood timbers in place of the rustic logs. This change gives the later shelters more straight lines and hard edges, creating a more modern and perhaps less rustic look.

While these shelters maintain the centered openings, in Shelters 1 and 10 the stone grill and chimney have been placed along the rear elevation rather than in the middle of the shelter, resulting in openings on only three elevations. With restrooms attached to the rear elevation, Shelter 16 does not possess a stone grill and chimney.

¹¹ Good, 6.

Each shelter is associated with a free-standing restroom facility that is generally removed from the immediate shelter area. Shelter 16 represents the only exception to this, with the restrooms attached to the rear elevation of the shelter. Restrooms are small, simple rectangular buildings, generally clad in wood and set on concrete foundations. Fenestration generally consists of an entrance on each of the smaller (usually side) elevations that provides access to the men's or women's restroom, rectangular window openings on the wider elevations, and a centered door on the rear elevation. Variations in roof form and exterior cladding divide the restrooms into four types.

Perhaps the most distinct type is that represented by the restrooms at Shelters 5 and 7 and the Boy Scout Area Restroom. These restrooms possess a gabled roof, exposed rafter tails and roof beams, and are clad in log siding on the bottom two-thirds of the exterior walls and board-and-batten siding on the top third. The log and board-and-batten sidings along with the exposed rafter tails reference the earlier Rustic style while not strictly adhering to its emphasis on natural, rough-hewn, hand-tooled materials.

The remaining three restroom types are more similar in design than those clad in log siding. The second restroom type is found in three restrooms throughout the park and is characterized by a low-pitched shed roof and board-and-batten siding. Four restrooms feature a gabled roof with vertical board-on-board siding. Finally, five of the park's restrooms possess a flat or very slightly pitched shed roof with vertical channel siding. The 83rd St. Shelter Restroom and the restroom associated with the Beach Shelter are the only restroom buildings constructed of stone. The Ranger Headquarters Restroom is also distinct from the other restroom types with both openings on the front elevation.

The 83rd St. Shelter and Restroom and the Beach Shelter House and restroom stand apart from the other shelters and restrooms because they are constructed primarily of stone. Although they possess some Rustic detailing, these resources display more of a modern influence. Similarly, Shelters 2, 6, 14 maintain some of the Rustic design elements but are easily identifiable as a distinct shelter type. One might be able to attribute these stylistic differences to later construction dates, however, the SHPO does not currently have on file the information necessary to document dates of construction for the majority of the park shelters. Additional research, historic photographs, and plans or architectural drawings might provide explanation and context for the evolution of shelter design in the park. Such documentation is important for all of the resources constructed after 1945.

Alterations/Integrity

The National Park Service defines historic integrity as the authenticity of a property's historic identity. Integrity is comprised of and conveyed by seven qualities—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. With a few exceptions, the resources surveyed generally possess good integrity with minimal changes to the historic fabric. The most common alterations are replacement windows in some of the buildings and the addition of concrete onto flat surfaces. Where these types of alterations or additions have occurred, most character defining features have been maintained. Although on the whole integrity is good and changes to

historic materials are minimal, in many cases deferred maintenance and inappropriate repairs have created serious deterioration issues that have negatively impacted individual resources' integrity. Indeed, deferred maintenance appears to be the greatest threat to the park's historic resources.

The resources that are the most altered and that display the most evidence of deterioration are the WPA-era resources. Of these, the resources that are most at risk due to deterioration are the stone culverts, the stone bridge, stone walls, Shelter 3 and 9, the overlook shelters/gazebos, and the South Entrance Lodge. The former North Entrance Lodge at 93rd St. (209-2128) has deteriorated to the point of ruins. Most of the stone structures display evidence of the application of inappropriate cement-based mortar. Although Portland cement was used in 1930s mortar mixes and can be appropriate for some repointing tasks, in the case of structures at Wyandotte County Lake Park, the mortar employed was too hard for the surrounding masonry units. This has resulted in severe spalling and even unit loss in some cases.¹²

Although concrete has been poured over the original stone floors, the WPA shelters (3, 7, and 9) otherwise possess relatively good integrity. Shelters 3 and 9 retain the wood shingle roofs, an important element in the Rustic design, however, both are in need of repair. While the wooden members in Shelter 3 are in generally good condition, those in Shelter 9 have experienced significant deterioration as the paint has worn away, leaving them exposed. This is particularly evident on the wood that is most exposed to the elements—the rafter tails, horizontal rails along the walls, and the benches that line the walls. The comparatively better condition of the more recently painted Shelter 3 demonstrates the effectiveness of a fresh coat of paint in protecting wood that is continually exposed to the elements.

Wooden members on these and other shelters throughout the park also have graffiti and carvings, likely added by park patrons since the park's opening in the 1930s. Although worth noting and monitoring, such vandalism does not appear to have significantly harmed the condition of the park's historic resources.

As two of the more unique structures at the park, the polygonal overlook shelters exhibit some of the most significant deterioration. The upper half of the Boy Scout Area Overlook Shelter/Gazebo (209-2106) has been dismantled and the stone base that remains was becoming overgrown with vegetation at the time of the field survey. Although portions of the stone piers were cracked or had become dislodged, the stone floor appeared to be in good condition. The remaining wood benches and rails required paint. Images taken in September 2006 show the gazebo roof in deteriorated condition with significant moss growth. The Overlook Shelter/Gazebo located at Shelter 11 (209-2111) has significant deterioration of the wood shingle roof. Deteriorated paint finishes have also caused some deterioration of the wood logs, particularly the exposed rafter tails. In spite of this deterioration, these shelters retain remarkably good integrity—both retain their original stone floors without the addition of concrete; prior to the partial dismantling of one, neither experienced even minor alterations; and neither are beyond repair.

¹² For more information on repointing mortar joints and the use of appropriate mortar types, see the National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*, available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>.

The condition of the South Entrance Lodge (209-2068) also merits individual discussion. Like the overlook shelters/gazebos and Shelters 3, 7, and 9, it is a unique structure within the park but also an excellent example of typical Rustic park architecture and as such, merits preservation. The interior of this resource was not surveyed, however, the exterior is in fair to deteriorated condition. Portions of the historic wood window sash and sill show some deterioration. The ends of exposed rafter tails, roof beams, and other wooden elements, particularly on the front of the house, exhibit evidence of moisture damage, likely due in part to the condition of the wood shingle roof. Again like the WPA shelters and overlook shelters/gazebos, the South Entrance Lodge otherwise has experienced very few alterations and exhibits a high level of integrity.

An exception amongst the WPA resources is the Davis Recreation Hall (209-2086), which has been very well maintained and has continued to serve a specific purpose. The Lake House (209-2081) and associated outbuildings also appear to be in good condition. The interiors of the house and stables are particularly intact.

Park resources constructed after 1945 have experienced minimal alterations, however, many suffer from deferred maintenance. The most prevalent maintenance issues are roofs and painting. Like the original WPA examples, many of the later shelters require a fresh coat of paint to prevent further deterioration of the wood. A common problem amongst the later shelters is deterioration of the wood at the bottom of vertical support posts. Shelter 4 was the one resource that had more significant alterations, although these may not necessarily harm the integrity of the structure.

Although they may not be historic, the guardrails added to the top of many culverts and retaining walls are generally in fair condition. Most appear to suffer from the use of cement-based mortar and/or the application of concrete to the flat tops of the stone piers. Whether cement was used in the original construction of the guardrail piers or whether it was a later addition is not known, however, it has caused spalling and unit loss in some cases. The round logs that form the rails of the guardrails are also in generally fair condition. As most of the logs appear to never have been painted, they suffer from significant deterioration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SHPO recommendations for Wyandotte County Lake Park address three areas—(1) research; (2) conservation and maintenance; and (3) National Register/Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Research

In order to fully understand and document the history of the park and the evolution of the park's architecture, additional archival research and documentation are highly recommended. Copies of original, dated architectural plans or drawings would be most beneficial. As representatives of the park have in the past indicated that such plans exist, they may not be difficult to uncover and

may answer many of the questions regarding dates of construction, particularly for the post-World War II resources.

Although there are many historic photographs and newspaper articles documenting the collapse and subsequent reconstruction of the dam, the SHPO does not have on file any historic images of the park itself. Any historic images of the park landscape or park structures, particularly images of the WPA structures dating from the 1930s-1950s, would be beneficial to documenting the history of the park.

Archival research will help to confirm the estimated dates of construction that were gleaned from the park history timeline. Many of the resources were not specifically referenced in the timeline and thus were recorded with estimated dates of construction based only on their physical appearance, not on documentation. Dates of construction are critical in assessing National Register eligibility for the post-World War II resources, as many of these resources were likely built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, close to the 50-year threshold for eligibility.

Maintenance/Conservation

The SHPO at KSHS recommends a two-pronged approach to the maintenance of Wyandotte County Lake Park's historic structures. Short-term recommendations concentrate on more immediate preservation concerns that, if not addressed in the near future, may result in significant or irreparable damage to the historic fabric of certain park structures. Long-term recommendations involve comprehensive planning to ensure routine monitoring and maintenance. Such actions will enable the park's historic resources to continue to serve the public for many years to come.

To best ensure the long-term maintenance and usability of the park's structures, the SHPO recommends the development of a comprehensive maintenance plan. A maintenance plan provides clear priorities and steps for repairs as well as a schedule for routine monitoring and preventative maintenance. An emphasis on routine monitoring and maintenance is key because together these two tasks can prevent or at least halt deterioration or damage before it becomes a more costly and involved repair.

Two of the most important and basic maintenance tasks that should be addressed are roofs and paint. Extant wood shingle roofs should be routinely inspected and repaired or maintained as necessary. Those roofs that currently suffer from deterioration should be repaired as soon as possible. Deteriorated roofs will lead to more serious and costly damage. Similarly, a regular application of paint to all exterior wooden surfaces can help prevent more costly deterioration of decorative and/or structural wooden members.

Grants are available through the SHPO to help fund the preparation of a maintenance plan. Specifically, the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant can fund up to sixty percent of the cost of hiring a preservation consultant or other professional to prepare a maintenance plan.

Preliminary applications for the 2010 HPF grant round are due February 1, 2010 with final applications due March 15, 2010.¹³

In the short term, items that will soon lead to significant deterioration should be addressed. Resources in imminent danger of severe deterioration should be stabilized as soon as possible in order to slow deterioration or prevent more significant problems from arising. This will maintain structures until more extensive repairs or restoration can be undertaken. With respect to the partially dismantled Boy Scout Area Overlook Shelter/Gazebo (209-2106), short-term recommendations are to stabilize the stone base that remains and trim the vegetation that has begun to grow around it.

The South Entrance Lodge/Gate House (209-2068) in particular should be considered as part of any short term repairs or stabilization. Portions of the building, including structural elements, have deteriorated to the point that they may lead to significant deterioration or compromise the building's structural integrity. As one of the park's original WPA structures and as an excellent example of Rustic style park architecture, this resource merits preservation. Located at the main entrance to the park, it is one of the first park resources that the public sees. Utilized to its full potential, this resource could serve as a valuable asset to the park, welcoming visitors and providing a tangible connection to the park's history.

Currently, even those resources that exhibit deterioration are not beyond repair. The SHPO recommends that any future restoration or repair work follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, developed by the National Park Service.¹⁴ In general, historic materials and features should be repaired rather than replaced. When features are deteriorated beyond repair, they should be replaced in kind with materials that match as closely as possible.

National Register Listing

There are three means by which historic properties may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Register of Historic Kansas Places (state register):

- (1) A building, site, structure, or object can be listed individually
- (2) A number of resources can be listed together in a historic district. Historic districts are generally contiguous geographic areas that contain historically or aesthetically related resources. Districts are comprised of "contributing" and "noncontributing" resources. Contributing resources are those that add to the historic quality and significance of the district and that maintain their integrity. Noncontributing resources do not contribute to the significance of the district because they are less than fifty

¹³ For more information on funding please see the Preservation Grants and Incentives page on the KSHS SHPO website (<http://www.kshs.org/resource/grantsincentives.htm>) or contact the SHPO Grants Manager, Katrina Ringler at kringler@kshs.org or 785.272.8681 ext. 215.

¹⁴ For more information on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, see the National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services website: http://www.nps.gov/history/HPS/TPS/standards_guidelines.htm .

years old, they are older than fifty years but have been significantly altered, or they are not associated with the historic theme or time period of the district.

- (3) Individual resources can be listed as part of a multiple property submission. The Multiple Property Documentation Form is a cover document and not a nomination in its own right, but serves as a basis for evaluating the National Register eligibility of related properties. It may be used to nominate and register thematically-related historic properties simultaneously or to establish the registration requirements for properties that may be nominated in the future. Multiple property documents are designed to streamline the method of organizing information collected in historic resource surveys and research for future National Register listing and preservation planning purposes. The form facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations. Information common to the group of properties is presented in the historic context, while information specific to each individual building, site, district, structure, or object is placed in an individual registration form.

Each of the three options above are potential approaches for listing Wyandotte County Lake Park's historic resources in the National Register. As discussed in the Research recommendations, however, in order to fully evaluate the National or state register eligibility of the park and individual resources, additional research must be conducted to determine specific dates of construction for individual resources. The three options for listing in the National Register as they relate to the park are discussed below.

Wyandotte County Lake Park may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. This represents the most comprehensive and logical approach to listing the park's historic resources. Those resources that are fifty years or older, that add to the historic and architectural significance of the park, and that retain integrity would be listed as "contributing." Those that are less than fifty years old—the Korean Vietnam War Memorial and the Schlagle Environmental Library—or that have been significantly altered would be classified as "noncontributing." Generally, a district must possess at least 60% contributing resources.

The buildings, shelters, and culverts constructed during the WPA period are the most obvious contributing resources. Many of the later shelters, restrooms, and buildings also appear to be potential contributors to a historic district. A more conclusive determination as to potential contributing and noncontributing resources can only be made following documentation of the dates of construction for all of the resources constructed after the WPA era. The potential for a historic district with at least 60% contributing resources is dependent upon these later resources.

A second option for listing is to individually list some of the park's historic resources in the National Register. Resources eligible for individual listing would likely be limited to those constructed in the 1930s and 1940s by the WPA.

The third option for National Register listing is to prepare a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) that establishes the historic context for the park and its resources. With the

preparation of the MPDF, a group of resources could be listed together or resources could be listed individually.

The SHPO recommends hiring a qualified historic preservation consultant to conduct the necessary research and prepare the nomination(s) for any of the above approaches. Partial funding for such a project is available through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant program. Preliminary applications for the 2010 HPF grant round are due February 1, 2010 with final applications due March 15, 2010.¹⁵

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¹⁵ For more information on funding please see the Preservation Grants and Incentives page on the KSHS SHPO website (<http://www.kshs.org/resource/grantsincentives.htm>) or contact the SHPO Grants Manager, Katrina Ringler at kringler@kshs.org or 785.272.8681 ext. 215.