

Identifying, Evaluating, and Preserving Minnesota's Historic Roadside Facilities

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ABSTRACT

Background

Many wayside rests were built along Minnesota highways during the 1930s and '40s by New Deal federal relief workers. Located in some of the most scenic areas of the state, the waysides contain features such as scenic overlooks, picnic areas, hiking trails, and historic markers. Growing transportation demands, land development pressure, and limited maintenance threaten these increasingly scarce sites.

Research

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) recognized their waysides were significant and hired consultants to evaluate these aging roadside facilities. Mn/DOT's goal was to identify those properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The research, *Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*, evaluated 102 properties and identified 51 individual sites and one district as eligible for the Register. As a result of the research, Mn/DOT is currently developing multiple planning documents.

Benefits

Mn/DOT anticipates the research and resulting planning documents will:

- a. Reduce internal and external individual project review processing time and costs.
- b. Enable better evaluation of site impacts related to roadway projects and facilitate proactive highway planning.
- c. Enable better decision-making for preserving and rehabilitating key sites within the context of their individual and collective cultural significance
- d. Identify properties eligible for the National Historic Register so preservation actions can be built into timely maintenance schedules.

INTRODUCTION

Today's traveler has come to expect our highway system to provide safe well-constructed roads and various amenities for the traveler. But in the early days of automobile travel, highways were poor and often simply the shortest distance between two points with little concern for the existing terrain and environment. By the 1920s, automobile travel was a favorite American pastime yet many roads were still unimproved and few opportunities existed for travelers to find safe drinking water, food, or a restroom. Soon the need for adequate facilities became critical. Roadsides were being overrun by travelers and community groups urged state governments to pass initiatives supporting recreational highway use.

As a result, "roadside development" became an emerging field in modern highway design. Proponents brought early planning, sound engineering, and landscaping skills to roadside design to increase highway safety and enhance Minnesota's growing tourism industry. This new design approach created roadside development facilities such as waysides and scenic overlooks, picnic tables and fireplaces, historical markers, and various other features. In Minnesota, they were developed along highways in some of the most picturesque parts of the state. Many were built during the 1930s and '40s.

Today, highway projects have been adversely affecting these early facilities at an increasing rate. Highways are changing to accommodate higher traffic volumes, larger vehicles, and faster speeds. Consequently, access to a small wayside built in the 1930s may now be difficult or unsafe, and the overall character of the site might be diminished by a loss of the scenic qualities for which the site had been originally selected. Worse yet, a highway project might call to demolish an entire roadside facility. In addition, years of use or improper maintenance have damaged the historic integrity of many sites.

Complicating the issue, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) lacked a comprehensive inventory of its roadside facilities. And when historic reviews (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) were not required—which is the case for some maintenance and utility projects—Mn/DOT found they were sometimes unaware of a cultural resource until planning was well underway, often unclear about a site's historic importance, and sometimes needed to quickly determine a property's significance but with only minimal information. At times, this led to late and hasty decisions to try to avoid adverse effects. Further complicating planning, Mn/DOT lacked adequate information to properly protect and maintain their historic facilities so they retained historic integrity. The result was frustration, inefficient planning, and the loss or inappropriate treatment of many significant sites.

Mn/DOT recognized the need to better understand and manage its roadside facilities. In 1996, using Transportation Enhancement funding, Mn/DOT began an extensive study of its waysides. The study's primary purpose was to compile a complete inventory of these sites and determine each property's importance, particularly their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Mn/DOT contracted with the historical consulting firm of Gemini Research to conduct the study. The research team consisted of Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, and Kay Grossman. Ms. Granger was the principal researcher and report author.

Upon completing the study, Mn/DOT found it owns a significant statewide collection of roadside development facilities. As a result of the study findings, Mn/DOT has begun to assess all National Register-eligible facilities in further detail. Several properties are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and plans are underway to restore or rehabilitate the most important sites. Additionally, practical planning documents are being prepared to help streamline transportation improvement planning and strategically prioritize, manage, and preserve Minnesota's roadside facilities. This paper summarizes Gemini Research's inventory

and final report (1, 2) and discusses the resulting planning documents and their benefits to Mn/DOT.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW & DOCUMENTATION

Mn/DOT's Site Development and Cultural Resource Units were the main contacts for this research. The units enlisted help from Mn/DOT district offices to identify sites, clarify ownership, and provide background information, all of which helped Mn/DOT and Gemini Research refine the scope. Mn/DOT studied all properties on current right-of-way that appeared to have been developed or acquired by the Minnesota Department of Highways for roadside development purposes and that contain pre-1961 structures. The study did not address archeological resources located within or adjacent to the properties.

Gemini Research began its statewide study of Minnesota's roadside facilities by reviewing archival material, including hundreds of photos and architectural drawings—many of which are stored in Mn/DOT's Central Office. They then conducted extensive fieldwork and researched associated historical themes. Because Mn/DOT's facilities were constructed over several decades, understanding historic contexts was particularly important to develop guidelines to determine which sites were important or unique within the collection.

Gemini identified several important themes including the promotion of modern highway design by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD), the MHD's Roadside Development Division, advancing the goals of roadside development through the federal relief programs of the New Deal, and the unique architecture and landscape architecture of the roadside development facilities. Gemini also created a list of key individuals involved in designing these facilities. Once Gemini identified the following significant themes, the roadside facilities' historical and architectural importance began to emerge, both individually and as a collection.

The Minnesota Department of Highways

The Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD), as Mn/DOT was known at the time, was established in its modern form in 1925. During its initial years, the department focused on simply building and maintaining roads in the state highway system. As it matured, the MHD emphasized not only roadway safety through sound engineering, but employed landscape architecture principles to minimize the impact of the built environment and enhance the roadside landscape (*Figure 1*).

The Roadside Development Division

In 1932, anticipating a 1933 U.S. Bureau of Roads federal requirement to spend a minimum of one-half of one percent of all federal highway funds on roadside development, the MHD established the Roadside Development Division. The study noted that Harold E. Olson, the division's first head, assembled a skilled staff that worked to bring a "balance of safety, good construction, economical maintenance, and natural beauty" to Minnesota highways and to build roads that were in harmony with surrounding views, topography, and vegetation. Olson and his staff helped make Minnesota a national leader in the roadside development field.

One of the MHD's major design goals was to maximize highway safety. For example, they planted "live snow fences" to reduce blowing snow and provided rest areas for tired travelers. A second major goal was to enhance the traveling public's experience by providing attractive roadways and roadside facilities. The Roadside Development Division tried to route highways through scenic areas and promoted purchasing rights-of-way that were 200'-400' wide, rather than the traditional 66'-100'. Scenic overlooks were built at key vantage points, welcome

signs were constructed at state entrances, and markers were erected to interpret historical events. On popular tourist routes, the MHD built an entire series of waysides, overlooks, and other features.

The New Deal Period

The Minnesota Department of Highways was an enthusiastic recipient of the unprecedented federal funding and tremendous manpower offered by the federal relief programs of the New Deal such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the National Youth Administration (NYA). The study noted that the partnerships worked well because roadside development projects could utilize large numbers of unemployed workers who could be put to work quickly and with minimal training.

The New Deal projects combined the skills and resources of various agencies. As a result of New Deal assistance, the MHD was able to fulfill many of the goals of its newly created Roadside Development Division and build an extensive collection of roadside facilities in just a few short years. A significant study finding was that the New Deal programs built 68 of the 102 inventoried properties. The study speculated that without the programs, these roadside development projects would have been delayed until at least the end of World War II or perhaps as late as the 1960s.

NPS Rustic Style

While several New Deal programs furnished the manpower to construct many of the state's roadside facilities, it was the National Park Service (NPS) that influenced their strong visual images. Along with technical assistance came one of the most enduring legacies of the Park Service, a design philosophy we now call NPS Rustic style. This philosophy was based on the concept that a man-made structure is always an intrusion on the natural landscape, but its impact could be limited through the use of native materials, with a hand-crafted appearance.

In May 1933, the NPS opened a branch office in St. Paul and worked in partnership with the Roadside Development Division on many of the state's most notable roadside facilities. In Minnesota, the use of the Rustic style resulted in an incredible variety of roadside development features built with locally available materials that include deeply-hued granite, warm limestone, colorful fieldstone, and even log construction. Construction was finely-crafted and labor-intensive, methods generally too costly to recreate today.

Arthur R. Nichols

The U.S Bureau of Roads and the National Park Service provided the philosophical framework for roadside design, yet it was individual designers who were often responsible for interpreting and implementing these ideas. The Minnesota Department of Highways was fortunate to call upon the skills of Arthur R. Nichols, perhaps the most productive landscape architect in the history of the state, and described as one of the individuals credited with establishing the field of landscape architecture in Minnesota.

He became the Roadside Development Division's founding Consulting Landscape Architect in 1932. The study concluded that Nichols designed hundreds of miles of highway right-of-way and most of the division's scenic overlooks, picnic areas, and historical markers. Additionally, Nichols helped formulate the division's early policies and goals and was a major figure in the new highway roadside development movement nationally. As the principal designer during the division's first decade, Nichols had a tremendous impact on the appearance of the state's roadside development work that is still evident today.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Prior to the study, Mn/DOT did not have a complete inventory of its roadside facilities. Many sites were well known, but had never been thoroughly studied. Original designers were unknown, architectural plans were not readily accessible, and little was known about the landscape designs. More importantly, there were insufficient contextual information and inadequate criteria to evaluate these properties' historical and architectural significance.

These problems were compounded by on-going threats to many roadside facilities. These threats include highway expansion projects and other development pressures, deterioration and neglect, improper repairs, vandalism, and land use changes; they often resulted in a loss of historic integrity.

Modern highway projects designed to accommodate today's high traffic volumes can dramatically affect a roadside facility and have at times resulted in the removal of entire facilities. Sometimes the impact is less direct, but equally adverse. For example, in the 1960s, Mn/DOT added a new access ramp to Trunk Highway 100 west of Minneapolis, isolating portions of Lilac Park. Now virtually inaccessible, the park's ornate pool, rock garden, and picnic area with stone tables and fireplaces have become overgrown, deteriorated, and obscured.

Design changes and improper repairs have also had a negative affect. Changes include paving original gravel roadways and parking areas with asphalt, expanding parking areas, and covering or removing flagstone walkways. Additionally, stone walls were often capped with concrete, altering the feature's rustic appearance. Masonry repairs are sometimes obvious, of poor quality, and sometimes damaging.

The trees and undergrowth have been neglected at overlooks. At Willow Lake Overlook vegetation has become so overgrown that there is virtually no view of the lake from the immense CCC-built stone concourse. Not only has the original view been lost, but the site has also attracted vandalism and dumping.

Additionally, the public's needs have changed. In the 1930s, wayside rest areas were among the few amenities available to the traveling public. Today many options exist, but little has been done to adapt roadside facilities to new uses. For example, a picnic area built in conjunction with a larger wayside may be left to deteriorate because it is rarely used. In time, the entire property may feel neglected and become underutilized.

These problems were wide spread; they occurred both in areas surrounded by urban development and quiet rural areas. And because Mn/DOT had no statewide strategy to manage and preserve its roadside facilities, few people understood the wayside's historical significance nor realized they were becoming increasingly scarce.

ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS

The study's primary purpose was to evaluate the eligibility of Mn/DOT's roadside development properties for the National Register of Historic Places. The properties were evaluated under the new historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960," which Gemini Research developed as part of the study. Minnesota's trunk highway system was established in 1920 and the interstate highway era began in 1960.

Gemini Research created inventories for 102 sites with standing structures or features. The sites were located in 42 of Minnesota's 82 counties. Due to budget constraints, Mn/DOT evaluated only properties with standing structures, though they own many more properties where only landscapes exist. In all Gemini identified 43 types of standing structures and objects.

Gemini Research developed extensive documentation to determine whether a property fits within this new context. To fall within the context, a property must meet all three of the following parameters:

- 1) Associated with the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD).
- 2) Associated with the field of roadside development.
- 3) Contains structures built before 1961.

Gemini Research also developed criteria to determine which sites were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. They applied a four-step evaluative process:

- 1) Determine if the property was associated with a Depression-era federal relief program or whether its construction was the result of a non-federal relief effort. Though many properties were products of federal relief programs, this was not a requirement for National Register eligibility.
- 2) Apply the fifty-year age criterion necessary for National Register eligibility, except in cases of exceptional significance.
- 3) Determine if the property is historically or architecturally significant. A property meets this requirement if it fulfills one of the following seven conditions:
 - Important federal relief project
 - Rare federal relief property type
 - Non-federal relief property that closely resembles a federal relief property
 - Significant to the history of roadside development
 - Significant to transportation history
 - Significant to local history
 - Design significance

4) Assess the property's physical integrity. This was one of the most challenging tasks because many of the inventoried properties have been altered to some degree--even if only the loss of American elm trees to disease. The National Register uses a composite assessment of seven qualities to help determine a property's overall integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property need not retain integrity in all seven areas to be eligible, but it must retain enough overall integrity to continue to convey its historic character and design intent. A property can be in very poor condition and retain sufficient integrity to still be National Register-eligible.

After Gemini Research applied the criteria to the 102 properties, 51 sites, as well as one historic district, were recommended eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the roadside development context.

There are three notable final products produced from the inventory study: extensive individual inventory files for each property; the final report, *Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*; and eight organized, cataloged, and indexed volumes

of historic photos. In addition, a less tangible but important result of the inventory is that Mn/DOT now knows they own a significant collection of historic waysides and that a valuable cultural resource exists along Minnesota's state highways.

Mn/DOT's inventory is noteworthy for multiple reasons. It was thorough, comparative, and evaluated properties statewide. Charles Birnbaum, Coordinator of the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative, said in describing the study, "It's not only ambitious, but it serves as a model for other state-level landscape survey initiatives."

Mn/DOT achieved the study's primary purpose of evaluating each roadside development facility's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. And while the inventory is noteworthy, so too are the planning tools resulting from the study. Mn/DOT is now developing strategic planning documents that will streamline historic reviews, inform more sensitive design and solutions, and help better prioritize, manage, and preserve these important resources.

National Register Eligible Properties

The properties eligible for the National Register contain hundreds of standing structures including shelters, restrooms, bathhouses, bridges, council rings, retaining walls, dams, and even sea walls and rock gardens. The properties vary in size and complexity. Many are small sites that contain a single standing structure, such as a scenic overlook wall or an interpretive marker. Others are more complex and feature elaborate designs including different types of facilities and several defined use areas.

Two eligible sites described below convey the diverse nature of these facilities and discuss the basis for both their National Register eligibility and for the upcoming strategic planning documents.

St. Cloud Historical Marker

The St. Cloud Historical Marker is typical of the small-scale sites featuring a principal feature. The marker consists of a raised, stone-paved terrace that is surrounded by low walls. A granite tablet describes Minnesota's first granite quarry, which opened just west of the site in 1868 (*Figure 2*).

Not surprisingly, the entire marker is built with local granite. What is unusual is the naturalistic stonework that features roughly-hewn, pointed blocks of granite. It is unlike any other studied marker, all of which have more formal designs.

The study recommends this property as eligible for the National Register because of its significance in roadside development history and for its design. The following inventory statement helps describe how the historic themes identified guided the evaluation:

The St. Cloud Historical Marker is among the 68 Depression-era properties in the inventory that represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. The site is important as a well-preserved example of the accomplishments of the NYA (National Youth Administration) working in cooperation with the MHD. It is an example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies that met the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to the nation's unemployed during the Great Depression.

The marker is important as an intact example of small-scale roadside parking areas that incorporate shrine-type markers. With its unusual, naturalistic design, featuring large, irregularly-cut, dark granite boulders, the marker is an

excellent example of the application of the National Park Service Rustic Style to an interpretive marker. The marker displays the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that characterize both the Rustic style and federal relief construction in Minnesota. Furthermore, the St. Cloud Historical Marker is an important example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A.R. Nichols.

The Garrison Concourse

Scenic overlooks were one of the features built most often by the Roadside Development Division. Overlook walls encouraged travelers to leave their automobiles and enjoy the natural environment. They also promoted highway safety because they discouraged tourists from stopping at unsafe locations and allowed drivers an opportunity to refresh themselves.

The Garrison Concourse is located in the town of Garrison, on the west shore of Mille Lacs Lake, an immense body of water in one of the state's most popular recreational areas. The Concourse is a massive masonry structure with a fortress-like appearance that projects 180 feet into the lake, rises 12 feet out of the water, and extends 336 feet along the shoreline. The retaining wall is built with huge, randomly-laid, split, pink and gray granite boulders. Other features include a circular roadway that forms a landscaped center island, a stone monument supporting a flagpole and historical marker, and concrete benches resting on granite pedestals (*Figure 3*).

The CCC built the Garrison Concourse from 1936-39. The Concourse was one of a series of projects that included many miles of highway improvements. Nearby travelers found a rest area with a log and stone picnic shelter, four stone bridges, and a second wayside and overlook. Collectively, they represent the most extensive roadside development project undertaken by the CCC in the state.

The Concourse is one of the largest stone features included in the inventory and the only overlook that projects into a lake. The Garrison Concourse was determined eligible for the National Register because of its significance in roadside development history, its design, and because it represents a rare federal relief property type.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PHILOSOPHY

Mn/DOT is constantly faced with the challenge to be a responsible steward to its cultural resources while balancing the need to safely and efficiently meet transportation needs.

Congress' 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) requires state transportation departments to develop a State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which provides an overall framework for transportation improvements. Mn/DOT must conform to statutory requirements when dealing with historic properties, but in its STIP Mn/DOT directs project managers to go a step further. It states, "Mn/DOT manages some of Minnesota's most significant non-renewable resources. As responsible stewards, the first goal is always to avoid affecting historic properties . . . and that even when there is no federal oversight, all studies and planning for corridors or corridor components should consider provisions to protect our important historic resources. Additionally, in early planning phases . . . consider restoring each property on a case-by-case basis."

Mn/DOT's Cultural Resources Unit helps implement this directive by providing federal Section 106 review assistance on specific projects. Additionally, they have conducted several cultural resource studies; the first was a statewide study of Minnesota's bridges. The unit assisted in the roadside facilities study and is currently studying historic farmsteads. A future

study will focus on railroads. Mn/DOT concluded that such studies, while involving considerable up-front costs and effort, are successful and cost-effective when compared with evaluating sites on an individual basis.

The Cultural Resources Unit also created Mn/Model, a predictive archeological model that indicates the probability of encountering an archaeological site anywhere within a project. Mn/Model provides several benefits to Mn/DOT. For instance, Mn/Model allows Cultural Resources staff to clear approximately 35% more projects per year and reduced the number of Memorandums of Agreement with other agencies by nearly 60% (3).

Further exemplifying Mn/DOT's stewardship efforts, Minnesota is one of five pilot states nationwide that is demonstrating how states balance transportation needs with environmental, cultural, community, and aesthetic concerns by applying "Context Sensitive Design (CSD)" (4) philosophy and principles. Mn/DOT is beginning to incorporate CSD into all aspects of transportation project development and is committed to developing projects that include early and continuous stakeholder involvement, flexible design, safety, aesthetics, environmental stewardship, and community sensitivity.

Since its completion, the study has brought greater enthusiasm for Mn/DOT's historic roadside development facilities. Ultimately, Mn/DOT plans to rehabilitate or restore many of the most significant sites.

IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

Mn/DOT's Site Development Unit maintains the inventory files, original plans and photos for the collection, and is largely responsible for day-to-day planning for each property. The Cultural Resources Unit is the primary contact to the State Historic Preservation Office and for commenting on construction impacts. The two units work together as caretakers.

The study's final report provided Mn/DOT with a much better understanding of its facilities and established a benchmark for future historic preservation planning. It allowed the department to consider the roadside sites as a collection of uniquely significant properties, rather than as unrelated sites.

According to Susan Roth, the National Register Historian at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, "The survey and report is one of the most comprehensive investigations of historical resources managed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It provides in-depth documentation on the origins of the roadside development program and its examination of the many roadside facilities and their distinctive character defining features provides the Preservation Office and Mn/DOT with the documentation necessary to determine their historical significance."

The report has set the stage for additional historic preservation documents that will assist in practical planning and property management. First, all sites eligible for the National Register are being assessed in greater detail. The Site Development Unit retained five consulting architects to prepare preservation and restoration treatment reports for the sites. Every treatment report analyzes each structure's condition and includes detailed information about a site's spatial organization and land patterns; topography; vegetation; circulation; features, furnishings, and objects; health and safety concerns; environmental concerns; and accessibility considerations. In some cases, reports suggest functional site adaptations to meet continuing and new uses or may suggest roadway design exceptions. In all cases, reports include recommendations and cost estimates for three comparative treatments: stabilization (immediate needs), preservation (20-year fix), and full-restoration (50-year fix). Reports will be completed in summer 2003.

The architects will also apply priority-ranking criteria developed by Gemini Research to determine each property's importance. The ranking uses four weighted categories: historical significance, architectural significance, integrity of setting, and critical need. Gemini Research is reviewing the treatment recommendations to ensure the properties will retain National Register-eligibility and will also review the architects' ranking and help Mn/DOT rate the entire collection. The information will be used to create a statewide management plan. For properties determined not eligible for the National Register, Mn/DOT is also ranking those sites and preparing a management plan.

The management plan will provide preservation direction to Mn/DOT when planning roadway projects and will include input from Mn/DOT's district offices. Mn/DOT anticipates the plan will recommend which properties to list on the National Register, which properties merit high preservation and maintenance efforts, those where ownership or responsibilities may be transferred to other caretakers, or those of lesser significance which may be documented and/or removed if future transportation needs arise. It will also include comprehensive guidelines to direct proper cyclical maintenance, such as proper masonry repairs and a vegetation management policy. These maintenance guidelines should prevent the adverse impacts on roadside facilities that have inadvertently occurred in the past.

Mn/DOT foresees the management plan will save project review time and money. Mn/DOT's district offices now have the inventory files for all roadside facilities within their jurisdiction and are aware of each wayside's historic significance. As a result, they can now more easily consider the facilities early during preliminary project development phases. This will allow them to better analyze alternatives so as to avoid or minimize adverse affects and to make informed, sensitive planning and maintenance decisions.

Early planning also allows time to identify and obtain restoration or maintenance funding or find financial and maintenance partners. Because the treatment reports include preservation recommendations and cost estimates, Mn/DOT can readily calculate the work involved and any associated costs right up front. Mn/DOT is seeking funding from multiple sources and recently received TEA-21 money to restore its Craigie Flour Mill site, which is located along Minnesota's Otter Trail Scenic Byway. The management plan will help Mn/DOT invest wisely and on those properties deemed most significant.

Mn/DOT has amended the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) on Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota (1933-1941) to include roadside development structures and is currently preparing National Register nominations for several sites. In addition to preparing the associated National Register boundaries, they are developing a conservation zone that adds critical adjacent areas. The conservation zone is designed to preserve each site's physical and visual setting and help buffer it from elements that may detract from its historic character. In some cases it may include purchasing land or creating easements and will be noted in the management plan.

While the research was valuable in its own right, the study has already yielded financial benefits. Mn/DOT estimated that individual National Register-eligibility surveys cost approximately \$5,000 each (plus unknown savings in contract processing and by having data early in planning). Evaluating the roadside properties collectively cost \$1,866 per site. This is an estimated savings of \$3,134 per site (almost 40%) and an assumed savings of \$319,668 for the 102 evaluated sites.

Mn/DOT also plans to develop a programmatic agreement between Mn/DOT and its various partner agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. Currently, when these agencies review a Mn/DOT project (usually as required under Section 106), it is handled on a case-by-case basis, which is often costly and

time-consuming. Once in place, the agreement will establish preservation commitments for Mn/DOT's collection and eliminate some external individual reviews.

During the 2002 construction season, Mn/DOT undertook its first restoration project since the study's completion. Work at the Orr Roadside Parking Area, a stone overlook on Pelican Lake in northern Minnesota's Iron Range, included rebuilding leaning and missing wall sections, removing encroaching vegetation, restoring the wall's timber railing, restoring the stone walk and curb, tuckpointing the entire wall, and adding an interpretive sign explaining the site's historic significance. The site is now listed on the National Register.

And even though the management plan is not yet complete, the study facilitated preserving the Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area, one of the state's most complex roadside facilities. Constructed in 1936 by the WPA, the property is located on both sides of Trunk Highway 23 on the east bank of the Sauk River in the town of Cold Spring. The elaborate and well-developed site included a large overlook built with pink, gray, and black granite, a second overlook defined by large granite boulders, a council ring, a picnic area with stone fireplaces, trails, a spring water outlet with a pump, a spring water outlet with a continuous flow that filled pools formed by two dams, a ball field, and two parking areas (*Figure 4*).

By 1970 the southern part of the site had been closed. Today many of the stone facilities are in poor condition and the majority of the landscape is overgrown. This site retains integrity but is deteriorated.

An extensive project was underway to improve highway function and safety. The project, as originally proposed, called for adding two traffic lanes, extensively widening the roadway, changing vehicular access to the park, closing a pedestrian pathway under a bridge that connects both sides of the rest area, cutting up to 60 feet of the scenic granite outcroppings along the road corridor, constructing an eight-foot tall safety wall along the north side of the road, and encroaching on a historic parking area.

Without the study and its ability to compare properties statewide, it is likely that the proposed alterations would have taken place, and it's even possible that the site may have been closed and demolished. However, once the study revealed the site's importance, the project was reassessed. Mn/DOT's Cultural Resources Unit and the State Historic Preservation Office reviewed the proposal and concluded that the project would not only have an adverse effect on the property, but would render the site ineligible for the National Register. An on-site visit helped the project engineers develop an appreciation for the site and led to an agreement that the project would be modified in order to retain the site's eligibility.

While the highway will still be expanded, every effort will be made to limit the roadway width without compromising function or safety. Two critical compromises will make the upcoming project a success:

1. Changing a 4:1 slope through the granite outcropping to a 1:1 ratio. This reduces the amount of granite removed and minimizes the visual impact on the larger property, as well as the road's physical encroachment on the property. The new cut is now 15 feet from the edge of the curb, rather than the previously proposed 24 feet.

2. Decreasing the speed limit from 45 to 40 miles per hour and reducing the ditch slopes from a ratio of 4:1 to 3:1. This reduces the clear zone width as well as physical encroachment on the north side of the park. The safety wall height will be reduced from eight to three feet, minimizing the visual impact to the property. The wall is now 19 feet closer to the road and will no longer affect the adjacent parking lot's configuration.

Much of the Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area will be restored, including removing an intrusive 1980s restroom building. Finally, in the event Mn/DOT decides to transfer the property

to a local government unit, an easement will be placed on the property to ensure this historic site is preserved.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Mn/DOT recognizes a critical need to communicate its research findings both within its own organization and to the public. As more people become aware of the roadside facilities' significance, more effort will be taken to preserve these properties for future generations.

Mn/DOT distributed multiple copies of the final report to its eight district offices. Along with the reports went a widely distributed memo explaining the inventory's purpose and requesting that maintenance or construction project managers with projects in or near the properties—particularly those that are eligible for National Register—consult the Cultural Resources Unit so as to avoid any adverse affects. As each of the planning documents is completed, the Site Development Unit will meet with its district offices to distribute and discuss the information. The report is available on Mn/DOT's website.

The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office is adopting Mn/DOT's criteria to evaluate the historical and architectural significance of similar properties. Over the years, several of Mn/DOT's original facilities have been transferred to municipalities and other government agencies. Mn/DOT's study findings will help these owners appreciate their properties' value and allow them to evaluate their historical significance.

To increase public awareness and appreciation for the state's roadside facilities, Mn/DOT developed a video (5) highlighting the history of Highway 100 west of Minneapolis. This is the one district recommended as eligible for the National Register. The video is mitigation to document a number of the highway's historic facilities that have been, and will be, lost to construction projects. The engaging video includes many historic photographs, live footage taken during construction, and interviews with individuals associated with the project. Minnesota's Twin Cities Public Television station produced and regionally broadcast the video. Like the Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area, perhaps if the roadside facility study had been completed before the Highway 100 reconstruction plans, more of the historic features would remain.

Mn/DOT's roadside development report has received public attention. The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, a statewide non-profit preservation advocacy group, presented Mn/DOT with an Honor Award recognizing the report for its innovation as a planning document and Mn/DOT for its roadside facilities stewardship. Additionally, the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative highlighted the research in its nationally distributed publication, *Vineyard* (6).

Other initiatives will include participating in joint promotional efforts with tourism groups and historical societies, developing a program in which local groups adopt a facility, and creating a means to share the information that Mn/DOT has assembled with agencies and organizations that administer similar properties.

SUMMARY

Managing Mn/DOT's roadside facilities creates both challenges and opportunities. For as development pressures continue and state budgets tighten, Mn/DOT is faced with competition for resources and funding. Yet, rather than a final document, the report is a launching point for additional studies, management and treatment plans, National Register nominations, and a programmatic agreement. These planning tools will help Mn/DOT preserve its Roadside Development Division's legacy and strike a balance between responsible stewardship to its cultural resources while safely and efficiently meeting transportation needs.

Mn/DOT's Commissioner, Elwyn Tinklenberg, commented that, "Mn/DOT is constantly looking for ways to improve the way we conduct business. Research such as this is a valuable design tool because it saves us both time and money. It maximizes the information known early in our planning and reduces internal and external review times. It also facilitates informed development decisions when we know a property's historic significance and improves maintenance and management decisions associated with a resource. In fact, this research has proven so valuable, we are currently conducting a similar historic study regarding farmsteads, and plan to do the same with railroads."

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FIGURES

1. Modern highway design.
2. St. Cloud Historical Marker.
3. Garrison Concourse.
4. The Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area

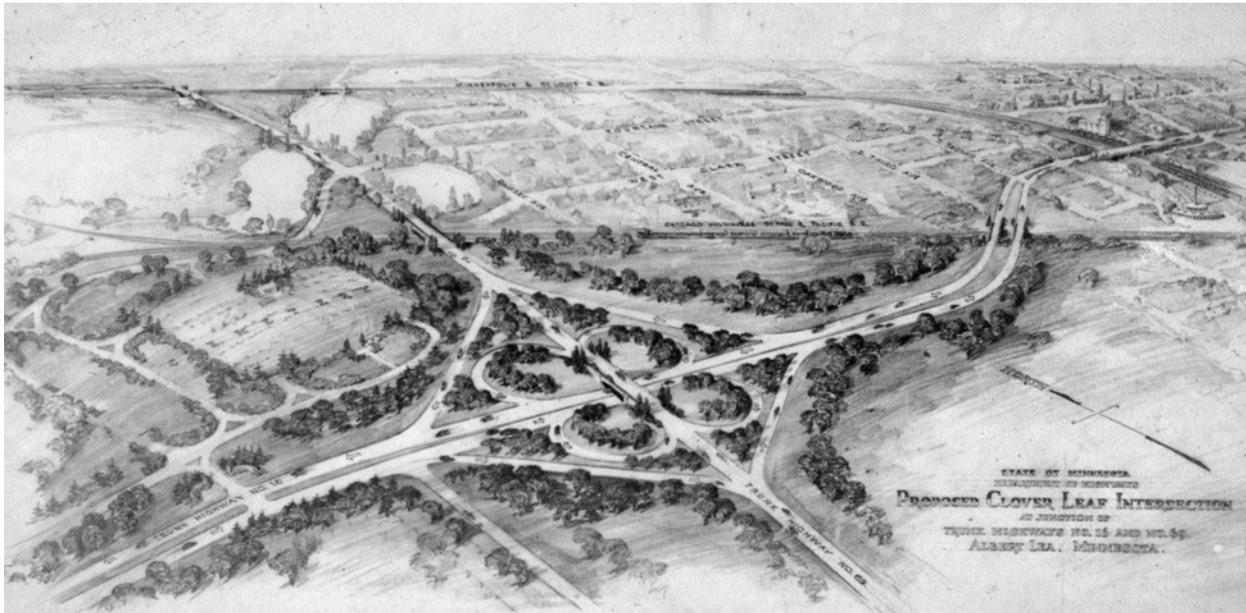


FIGURE 1 Modern highway design.

A late 1930s sketch for a proposed cloverleaf illustrates safety features such as grade separations and interchanges and aesthetic features such as preserving and planting trees so roads are in harmony with the surroundings.



FIGURE 2 The St. Cloud Historical Marker.
Note the unusual naturalistic stonework flanking the monument.



FIGURE 3 Garrison Concourse.

A bird's-eye perspective drawing from 1937 showing the Garrison Concourse design and adjacent roadway reveals the site's high complexity. Few changes have occurred since construction over 60 years ago.



FIGURE 4 Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area.

The Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area was one of the state's most extensive roadside development projects. A.R. Nichols' perspective drawing conveys the complexity of the design, which allowed for a variety of activities including picnicking, hiking, softball, campfires, and enjoying scenic vistas.