

809

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Oconaluftee Ranger Station

Other names/site number: Oconaluftee Administration Building (North Carolina Headquarters)

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: Newfound Gap Road, Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)

City or town: Cherokee

State: NC

County: Swain

Not For Publication:  N/A

Vicinity:  X

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

	<u>10/17/2016</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>NPS FPO</u>	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official: 	Date <u>8/29/2016</u>
Title: <u>Deputy Secretary, SHPO</u>	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government





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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/National Park Service Rustic with Colonial Revival elements

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE/Quartzite, Slate; WOOD

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station (currently known as the Oconaluftee Administration Building, or North Carolina Headquarters, to differentiate it from the Oconaluftee Ranger Station built in 1959 at the nearby Smokemont Campground) is a one-story, wood and masonry building constructed 1938–1940 as a secondary administration and visitor contact center for the North Carolina side of Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Great Smoky Mountains NP). The 2.13-acre property in Swain County, North Carolina, is located between Newfound Gap Road (US 441, formerly NC 107) and the Oconaluftee River in the southeast corner of the park. The building retains integrity as a representative example of National Park Service Rustic architecture from the initial park development period (1926–1942) and of Public Works Administration (PWA)/Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) construction from the late 1930s. The original site design and small-scale landscape features associated with the building also remain intact.

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Draft National Register documentation for the Oconaluftee Ranger Station was prepared in 1992 but was never approved by the Keeper of the National Register.<sup>1</sup> The Tennessee and North Carolina State Historic Preservation Offices concurred in 1999 with a draft nomination for a National Register historic district (based on a 1998 draft Historic Resource Study) that addressed park development from park creation in 1926 through 1942 and included the Oconaluftee Ranger Station as a contributing resource.<sup>2</sup> This registration form nominates the property individually under the broader contexts defined in a 2016 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) prepared for the Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.<sup>3</sup>

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station is located on 2.13 acres near the southeastern entrance to Great Smoky Mountains NP in Swain County, North Carolina, on the west side of the Oconaluftee River above its confluence with Ravens Fork Creek. The river forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. The main highway through the park, Newfound Gap Road, runs along the western edge. The wide and level river terrace and floodplain between the two waterways extends for about 0.75 miles east to west. The view from the ranger station to the south is across open pastureland toward the forested hillsides and mountains that rise above the wide river floodplain. The site is at an elevation of approximately 2,000 ft (feet), with the surrounding mountain ranges at 3,000 ft and higher. Hardwoods and hemlocks line the riverbank and form a backdrop for the ranger station and the park's Oconaluftee Mountain Farm Museum about 550 ft to the southeast. A large asphalt parking lot constructed in 1974 is directly south of the ranger station, connected by a paved loop to the original ranger station parking area west of the building. Two one-story, architecturally compatible park buildings constructed in 2010—the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and the Oconaluftee Visitor Center Comfort Station—are located along the east side of the loop

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<sup>1</sup> Trout, Edward L., National Register Nomination Form: Secondary Administration Building, Revised DRAFT. Copy on file at GRSM, Box No. 80235, Box 2 of 2, Folder "Oconaluftee Visitor Center," 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Blythe, Robert W., National Register Nomination Form: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Park Development Historic District, DRAFT. Copy on file at GRSM, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Olausen, Stephen, John Daly, and Laura Kline, *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Report prepared for National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, GA, by PAL (The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.), Pawtucket, RI, 2016.

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and south parking area. Concrete sidewalks provide pedestrian circulation between the buildings, parking areas, and Mountain Farm Museum.

### Resource Descriptions<sup>4</sup>

The **Oconaluftee Ranger Station (LCS No. 91430, contributing building)** completed in 1940 faces south near the center of the site. The ground in front of and to the west of the building is nearly level, while the grade drops away approximately 8 ft toward the river to the east. Consequently, the one-story building's full basement is exposed on only the north and east sides, and the building appears from the front to be much smaller than it is. Its modified L-shaped plan consists of a side-gabled main block oriented east-west with a perpendicular end-gabled rear ell extending to the north. The underlying structural system is steel-reinforced, poured-in-place concrete. The main roof is low-pitched, while the rear ell's roof is steeper and has two gabled dormers on the east slope. Both roofs are clad in medium-gray slate shingles, specified in the original building plans but not installed until 1955. The walls are finished on the exterior with a veneer of light-gray quartzite stone cut into rough-faced rectilinear blocks of varying sizes and laid in a random ashlar bond. Integral stone chimneys rise from the end-gable walls of the main block. The upper portion of the rear ell's north gable end is clad in painted clapboards. A full-width engaged porch spans the five-bay facade (south) elevation, emphasizing the building's horizontality and anchoring it to the site. A low-pitched shed-roof porch extends across approximately half the west side elevation of the rear ell. The porches are carried on massive squared and chamfered chestnut posts fitted with knee braces and stone bases. Flooring for both porches is Crab Orchard flagstone<sup>5</sup> laid in a random pattern.

The main entrance to the building in the center bay of the facade contains a tongue-and-groove batten door with a small multi-pane light centered in the upper portion. An identical wood door opens onto the side porch from the rear (north) wall of the main block. A doorway centered in the north wall of the rear ell, halfway between the main and basement levels, contains a similar door painted white with a four-light transom above it. A steel door at the east end of the main block's rear elevation and two partially glazed

<sup>4</sup> Portions of the resource descriptions in this registration form were adapted from *Historic Structure Report: Oconaluftee Ranger Station/Visitor Center, Swain County, North Carolina, Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, by Ruthanne Livaditis Mitchell and Rene Cote, National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, GA, 1990; and *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Historic Resource Study*, by John Daly and Laura Kline, PAL (The Public Archaeology Lab, Inc.), Pawtucket, RI, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Crab Orchard flagstone is a distinctive mottled stone quarried from Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau and named for a town in Cumberland County.

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aluminum doors in the east wall of the rear ell provide access to the basement level. The latter replaced the original six-over-three windows in these locations in 1972.

Fenestration in the main block consists of six-over-nine, double-hung wood sash (windows) set into rectangular openings with cut stone lintels and sills—four in the facade, two in the east elevation, and one at the west end of the rear elevation. A narrow, two-light casement window is centered in the east gable end. Two rectangular stone light wells at grade on the east and west ends of the main block are covered with metal gratings. The light wells provide access to basement window openings that contain two-over-two steel sash. The rear ell's first-story window openings—four in the east elevation, four in the west, and two in the north—are identical to those in the main block but contain six-over-six, double-hung wood sash, with the exception of a replacement vinyl one-over-one window in the northernmost opening under the west side porch. The two window openings that remain at the basement level in east elevation originally contained six-over-three windows but now have louvered vents in the upper portion. A six-over-six window with a flat wood surround and an exterior storm is centered in the north gable end beneath a square louvered vent. The two roof dormers contain six-over-six windows with exterior storms. A metal fire escape stair, installed c. 1970, is attached to the southernmost dormer and the stone wall below it.

On the interior, the main block of the building is divided into two rooms: a 22 by 41 ft great room, originally used as a lobby/visitor contact area and now as an open meeting space, and a 22 by 12½ ft room at the east end, originally occupied by the chief ranger's office and now used as a conference room. The roof framing is exposed in the great room and consists of chestnut beams, rafters, kingposts, and braces, all hand-squared and chamfered. The roof system rests on a painted board frieze above the walls, which are paneled on three sides with vertical tongue-and-groove chestnut boards. Rectangular bronze grilles for the heating system are centered at the top of some wall sections. The windows have deep reveals and diagonal-board paneling beneath the sills. The lower portion of the west end wall is veneered with quartzite masonry to match the exterior, and a simple wood mantel added in 2005 frames the fireplace at the center. The upper portions of the west and east walls are covered with painted plaster. The floor is covered with the same flagstone pavers used for the two porches. The smaller conference room has a low flat ceiling of tongue-and-groove boards on hewn joists trimmed with cove moldings. The walls are paneled with vertical boards above horizontal-board wainscoting, and the flooring is narrow oak

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strips. Removable diagonal-board panels cover the radiators beneath the windows. The full-height stone fireplace centered on the east wall projects slightly into the room and has no mantel.<sup>6</sup>

The rear ell contains additional staff offices and a staff kitchen. The majority of the ceilings are covered with 2 ft by 1 ft acoustic tiles glued in a staggered pattern, the walls are paneled with wide beaded vertical tongue-and-groove white pine boards, and the narrow oak strip floors are covered with 12-inch square vinyl tiles.<sup>7</sup> A stairwell at the north end of the ell contains a dogleg staircase with oak railings and square newel posts with chamfered tops. Two flights of oak steps with a narrow window-lit landing lead up to the attic level, and two flights of terrazzo steps with a landing at the rear exterior door lead down to the basement. The National Park Service converted part of the originally unfinished attic to offices in 1970. The rooms have 12-inch square acoustic tiles glued to the ceilings and sloping side walls, wood laminate paneling on the knee and partition walls, and cork floors with vinyl baseboards. The full basement has poured and plank-formed concrete ceilings, walls, floors, and posts and is subdivided into a mechanical equipment room, storage areas, and a restroom. The Park Service added two basement restrooms to the building in 1948 that originally opened onto the interior hallway. During a 1972 renovation of the restrooms, workers closed off the interior doors and installed the exterior aluminum entrances. The southern restroom has since been converted to a storage room.

The initial site plan for the ranger station provided visitor parking off Route 441 in a **Parking Area (LCS No. 91812, contributing structure)** constructed parallel to the road on the west side of the building by 1940. The configuration of the parking lot appears to be unaltered. A narrow grass island, about 20 ft wide and interspersed with mature trees, separates the parking area from the busy road and provides a functional and visual distinction between the road and the building. The asphalt-paved parking area has stone curbing along the east side and a low stone retaining wall along the west side. A driveway at the north end of the parking area curves through the trees to an employee parking lot on the east side of the building, originally an informal gravel lot that was paved in 1975.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Drawing NP-GSM 2100-E (17 sheets), "Secondary Administration Bldg.," revised July 29, 1939.

<sup>7</sup> The ceiling tiles are presumably the original Celotex brand tiles noted in the February 1941 Final Completion Report for the ranger station (Building Files, Park Library, Great Smoky Mountains NP). The National Park Service replaced those in the hall and in one of the offices on the east side of the ell with suspended acoustic panels in 2012. The Park Service planned to remove the vinyl floor tiles in the rear ell and restore the original oak floors in 2015.

<sup>8</sup> After consultation with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, the National Park Service installed two electric vehicle charging stations at the far northeast corner of the parking lot in 2015.

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The Park Service manipulated the natural topography of the ranger station's immediate surroundings to nestle the building into the site and downplay its size. Judicious plantings help to naturalize the site. The tree line of large hemlocks and hardwoods at the river's edge existed before construction began. Similar species of trees, likely planted in the early 1940s, surround the employee parking area. Other native plantings near the building include ivy, rhododendron, dogwood, red maple, tulip poplar, and white pine. Additional landscaping features match the materials and design of the building. **Stone Retaining Walls and Terraces (LCS No. 91743, contributing structure)** constructed after the building's completion in 1940 help to mediate the site's grade change.<sup>9</sup> A stone retaining wall extends approximately 60 ft east from the northeast corner of the main block along the south edge of the employee parking area. The wall tapers from 10 ft high at the west end to 2 ft at the east. At the north end of the building, a flight of stone steps with a metal pipe railing leads up from the parking area to a landing halfway between the main and basement levels, where the rear entrance to the building is located. A second flight of steps then continues up to a flagstone walkway that leads to the west visitor parking area. Two stone terraces, each approximately 12 ft square and 4 ft high, are located on the slope between the steps and the building. At the top of the steps, a second flagstone walkway runs south to a roughly 25 ft square patio of flagstone paving that extends west from the side porch. A **Stone Drinking Fountain (LCS No. 91744, contributing object)** believed to date to c. 1940 is set on flagstones at the top of the stone steps, immediately north of the flagstone walkway. It has an approximately 3 ft high, truncated pyramidal form constructed of roughly squared rectangular stones laid in horizontal courses. A step consisting of a single stone block projects from one side at grade. A similar, non-contributing, drinking fountain likely installed c. 1975 is located approximately 5 ft east of the bottom of the steps, at the north end of the wide concrete sidewalk that runs at grade along the ell's east wall and the north side of the stone retaining wall.<sup>10</sup>

### **Statement of Integrity**

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building's appearance is virtually unchanged from the time of its construction. The slate roof added in 1955 was the roofing treatment originally specified. Other exterior alterations have been confined to the side elevations of the rear ell and consist of the replacement of two basement-level windows with exterior doors, the addition of a metal fire escape stair, and the replacement of one original

<sup>9</sup> Drawing NP-GSM 2100-E; Drawing NP-GSM 2198, "Grading Plan-Secondary Administration Building," September 11, 1939.

<sup>10</sup> Mitchell and Cote, *Historic Structure Report: Oconaluftee Ranger Station/Visitor Center*.

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wood window sash on the first floor with vinyl. The building continues to convey strongly its associations with the initial park development period and the New Deal era of public works construction. Its original function has shifted slightly with the construction of a newer visitor contact center for the North Carolina side of the park, but it remains in park administrative use.

The immediate building site also retains integrity to the site plan for the Secondary Administration Area included in the 1939 Master Plan (Drawing No. NP-GSM 2165) and the 1940 Planting Plan for the Secondary Administration Building (Drawing No. NP-GSM 2280). The parking area and stone curbing west of the building; the retaining wall to the east; and the stone terraces, steps, and upper drinking fountain to the north are all intact. Minor alterations to the landscape consist of the concrete paving over some of the original flagstone walks surrounding the building, the addition of the second stone drinking fountain at the bottom of the stone steps, and the addition of two electric vehicle charging stations to the visitor parking area. A garage built in 1972 along the east edge of the employee parking area behind the building was removed within the past ten years. The flagstaff erected c. 1940 directly in front of the ranger station, on axis with the main entrance, was moved in 2010 to a grass island southeast of the building. The character-defining elements of spatial organization, circulation, and vegetation remain intact.

Integrity of setting is compromised by several factors. The construction in 2010 of a visitor center and comfort station directly opposite the ranger station, adjacent to an expanded parking lot built in 1974, altered the historic view to the south across a large field. However, both new buildings were designed to be architecturally compatible with the ranger station, having similar massing, roof profiles, and exterior materials. The landscape that connects the ranger station to the new visitor center complex and the Oconaluftee Mountain Farm Museum is also compatible with the historic setting.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
CONSERVATION

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**Period of Significance**

1938–1942

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1938–1940: Construction of Oconaluftee Ranger Station

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Barber, Charles I.

Civilian Conservation Corps

\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the state level as a resource that meets the registration requirements established for the Administrative and Public Contact Facility property type under the Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The property possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Conservation within the MPDF context The Initial Development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1926–1942 because it represents efforts of conservationists, state officials, Congress, and the Roosevelt Administration to revive the economy through public works while also conserving natural resources and providing recreational opportunities to the American people. The property is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture within the MPDF context The Initial Development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1926–1942 because it

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embodies the distinctive design philosophy and qualities of craftsmanship perfected by the NPS in the New Deal period. It is a carefully designed and sited administrative building that fully exemplifies NPS naturalistic design principles.

The period of significance for the Oconaluftee Ranger Station extends from 1938, the beginning of construction on the building, through 1942, the end of the initial park development period as defined in the MPDF.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### **CRITERION A – CONSERVATION**

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station (LCS No. 91430, contributing building) meets the registration requirements for significance under Criterion A in the area of Conservation as defined in the Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park MPDF (Section F) for the Administrative and Public Contact Facility property type within the MPDF context The Initial Development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1926–1942. It was constructed during the 1933 to 1942 period in accordance with the park’s master plan to provide essential administrative and visitor facilities and possesses the requisite aspects of integrity necessary to convey its associations with the initial development campaign at Great Smoky Mountains NP and President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal program as defined in the MPDF. PWA and CCC laborers constructed the Ranger Station, intended as the primary building within a secondary administrative area on the North Carolina side of the park, between 1938 and 1940.

During the decade of planning and land acquisition that occurred after the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains NP in 1926, the National Park Service considered Floyd Bottoms, Mingus Creek, and Smokemont as possible sites for a North Carolina headquarters that would complement the primary administrative center planned for the Sugarlands area of Tennessee.<sup>11</sup> All three sites were easily accessible from the main park road (Newfound Gap Road). The valley of the Oconaluftee River broadens near its confluence with Raven Fork Creek, forming the area named Floyd Bottoms. Mingus Creek enters the Oconaluftee from the west in the northern portion of Floyd Bottoms and forms another reasonably level valley suitable for development. Smokemont, already selected for campsite development, is 3 miles

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<sup>11</sup> Drawing NP-GSM 2076, “Preliminary Plan for Secondary Administration and Utilities Group at Mingus Creek,” Dec. 26, 1933; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1933, 3; *Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina and Tennessee, Master Plan, Third Complete Edition, 1937.*

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farther north in the Oconaluftee Valley. The Park Service ultimately chose Floyd Bottoms, probably because it was closest to the North Carolina park entrance and near the proposed terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The State of North Carolina acquired the former pasture land of the Enloe-Floyd family farm, originally occupied by the Mingus family in the late eighteenth century, in 1927 and deeded it to the federal government for the park in 1934.

Early versions of the master plan for the secondary administration area at Floyd Bottoms sited the administration building/ranger station between Newfound Gap Road to the west and the Oconaluftee to the east, the location in which it was built (Figure 1).<sup>12</sup> The front of the building looked south across a large field that had been part of the Floyd farm; the large Floyd barn remained on the property some 100 yards to the southeast until 1952, when it was moved farther south to the Mountain Farm Museum. A museum building was proposed initially for Mingus Creek and later for a site on the west side of Newfound Gap Road south of the ranger station. The museum building was never constructed, but interpretive exhibits were placed in the ranger station lobby. Residential and utility groups were planned for the area east of the Oconaluftee, northeast of the ranger station. Revised residential and utility area plans were finally implemented under the Mission 66 program.<sup>13</sup>

A team of architects from the Southeast Regional Office of the NPS Branch of Plans and Design in Richmond, Virginia, under the supervision of NPS Chief of Planning Thomas Vint, prepared the first conceptual sketch for the “Secondary Administration Building” dated November 19, 1938, and subsequent drawings. The following last names, presumably NPS staff, appear on the drawings: Thrush, Higgins, Alexander, Nevins, Guscio, and Denniston. A November 22, 1938, sketch showing two perspective views and a floor plan of the ranger station essentially in its built form is signed by A. J. Higgins and carries an “O.K.” from C. I. B., almost certainly the prominent Knoxville architect Charles I. Barber. In 1936, Barber designed a cabin in the park for the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club based on the dog-trot style house common in the mountains of East Tennessee and using materials from an existing building. When the NPS began working on the plans for the park administrative buildings at Sugarlands and Oconaluftee, he donated his architectural consulting services free of charge. Barber reviewed a set of

<sup>12</sup> The earliest documents and drawings related to the proposed building referred to it as the “Secondary Administration Building,” but after the building’s completion in 1940 the park called it the “Oconaluftee Ranger Station” (1939 Master Plan, 1942 Master Plan). The building has had several other names over the past 50 years, including the Museum-Ranger Station, Oconaluftee Ranger Station and Museum, and Oconaluftee Visitor Center. The NPS currently (2016) refers to it as the Oconaluftee Administration Building (North Carolina Headquarters), and the park maintenance files list it as Building No. 162, FMSS No. 91430.

<sup>13</sup> Master Plan n.d. [1935–1936?]; Drawing NP-GSM-2165-B, 1942.

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detailed plans for the Secondary Administration Building in March 1939, and in June 1939 NPS Acting Director Arthur E. Demaray approved the final set of 17 construction drawings checked by NPS architectural consultant Albert Good (author of the 1938 NPS publication *Park and Recreation Structures*).<sup>14</sup>

A 1938 PWA allotment (Project OP-752-05-245) included \$18,000 for construction materials for the ranger station, and PWA crews began to dig trenches and pour concrete for the building on December 16, 1938. Full CCC participation in the project was authorized in January 1939 (Job No. 961), and PWA labor was phased out. CCC involvement included quarrying and transporting stone for the exterior walls from the nearby Ravensford quarry (Job No. 968), carpentry (Job No. 1006), and masonry. A few locally hired axe men hewed the timbers for the porches and lobby. Carpenters from CCC camp NP-4 at Smokemont (some of whom transferred to camp NP-5 when NP-4 was abandoned) worked on the building in the summer of 1939, completing the basement masonry walls and the poured concrete in August. Framing of the door and window frames, the porch posts, and the lobby roof trusses occurred in October. Beginning in December 1939, stone masons from camp NP-2 who had worked on the Sugarlands headquarters building (completed by January 1940) assisted in erecting the exterior cut stone walls of the building at Oconaluftee. Cold weather delayed work throughout the first few months of 1940, but all the exterior walls were completed by the end of June. The stone masons also laid the stone for the two fireplaces and the exterior landscape features, including the walkways, steps, **Stone Retaining Walls and Terraces (LCS No. 91743, contributing structure)**, and **Stone Drinking Fountain (LCS No. 91744, contributing object)**. The building was ready for occupancy on November 25, 1940 (Figures 2–6). CCC men subsequently finished grading, landscaping, and construction of the original public **Parking Area (LCS No. 91812, contributing structure)** along the building's west side and the employee parking lot behind the building (Figure 7). Plantings from this period were limited to scattered maples, oaks, and dogwoods in the immediate area of the building.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Drawing NP-GSM 2100B, "Secondary Adm. Bldg., Mingus Creek," November 22, 1938; Drawing NP-GSM 2100-E (17 sheets), "Secondary Administration Bldg." July 29, 1939; Jones, Robbie D., 1996, *The Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee* (The Smoky Mountain Historical Society, Sevierville, Tennessee), 109; "Final Report on the Construction of the Secondary Administration Building, Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Mingus Creek, North Carolina," Typescript, n.d., Park Maintenance Files, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Superintendent's Monthly Reports, October 1938, 1; November 1938, 1; November 1940, 1; "Final Report on the Construction of the Secondary Administration Building, Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Mingus Creek, North Carolina," Typescript, n.d., Park Maintenance Files, 1–6; Drawing NP-GSM 2280, "Planting Plan, Oconaluftee Ranger Station," 1940; Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1942.

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## CRITERION C – ARCHITECTURE

The Oconaluftee Ranger Station meets the registration requirements of the Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park MPDF for significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture within the MPDF context The Initial Development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1926–1942 for its embodiment of the design philosophy and qualities of craftsmanship perfected by the National Park Service in the New Deal period. The building qualifies as an example of the Administrative and Public Contact Facilities property type, defined in the MPDF (Section F) as an area designed to provide essential administrative and visitor facilities. A prominent building within the park, the Ranger Station represents the evolving expression of the Park Service Rustic style from that of the western parks to an aesthetic appropriate for eastern parks and adheres to the design principles of visual and cultural harmonization espoused by the Park Service during the 1933 to 1942 period. The Ranger Station possesses all the aspects of integrity necessary to convey its architectural significance as identified in the MPDF.

Like the main park headquarters building at Sugarlands, the Oconaluftee Ranger Station is a residentially scaled, Park Service Rustic building employing local materials. As a building subsidiary in importance to the Sugarlands headquarters, however, the Oconaluftee Ranger Station is somewhat less formal and does not order the surrounding landscape by an extension of lines from the building outward in the way that the primary headquarters building does. Motorists entering the park from the Cherokee side once had an unobstructed view of the Oconaluftee building, which faces south, from across Floyd Bottoms. In design, it closely resembles the central block of the Sugarlands headquarters with a rear ell added. The main block has a gently sloping side-gabled roof and end-wall chimneys; the rear ell is also gable-roofed. On the west, where the rear ell meets the main block, is a shed-roofed side porch. As at Sugarlands, the building features a quartzite stone veneer over concrete and a full-facade front porch carried on six hand-hewn and chamfered posts. Although the original plans specified a slate roof, wood shingles were the initial roofing material, possibly because the NPS rushed construction to give the building a finished exterior appearance in time for the park's dedication in September 1940. Slate tiles replaced the shingles in 1955. The architect's drawings also specified window shutters, which were never installed. The materials and workmanship on both buildings exemplify the wood craftsmanship and stonemasonry of the CCC and local skilled workers.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ruthanne L. Mitchell and Rene Cote, *Historic Structure Report: Oconaluftee Ranger Station/Visitor Center, Swain County, North Carolina, Great Smoky Mountains National Park* (Atlanta, GA: Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 1990), 10, 12.

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The similarity of the two administrative buildings at Great Smoky Mountains NP is unremarkable, considering that Knoxville architect Charles I. Barber consulted on both and Frank E. Mattson, the NPS resident landscape architect for the park from 1936 to 1941, supervised construction and prepared specifications for both. The completion report prepared for the Oconaluftee building explicitly notes that the specifications for the main administration building at Sugarlands were used for the secondary building where they applied to similar materials. The designs developed by NPS architects in the 1930s for administrative buildings in the southeastern parks reflect the organic flavor of the “rustic” park buildings in the West and the renewed interest in colonial and early nineteenth-century America that characterized much domestic architecture in the East. In keeping with the regional philosophy of NPS designs, the Great Smoky Mountains NP buildings exhibit Colonial Revival and NPS Rustic characteristics, as well as aspects of domestic vernacular house forms typical in the Southern Appalachians. The Oconaluftee Ranger Station resembles an enlarged and slightly formalized version of a mountain cabin. The Administration Building at Kings Mountain National Military Park in South Carolina, built in 1940–1941 by CCC labor and the same construction company as the Sugarlands Headquarters Building, features the same basic form and materials. The CCC also built similar stone and timber cabins in several Tennessee state parks.<sup>17</sup>

### **Charles Irving Barber (1887–1962)**

Charles Irving Barber, the principal of the prominent Knoxville architectural firm of Barber & McMurry responsible for designing numerous landmark residential, civic, and commercial buildings in Knoxville and across the Southeast during the twentieth century, made several important contributions to the architectural infrastructure of the initial park development period at Great Smoky Mountains NP.<sup>18</sup> Born in DeKalb, Illinois, on October 24, 1887, Barber moved with his family the following year to Knoxville, where his father George Franklin Barber (1854–1915) established a successful residential architecture firm.<sup>19</sup> In the summer of 1907, at the age of 20, Charles traveled to Europe on a traditional grand tour of Beaux Arts European architecture in Italy and Greece. He continued his study of Beaux Arts tenets under

<sup>17</sup> Blythe, Robert W., Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson, 1994, National Register Nomination Form: Kings Mountain National Military Park.

<sup>18</sup> Most sources list Barber’s middle name as Irving, although some have it as Ives.

<sup>19</sup> The company, which employed about 30 draftsmen and 20 secretaries, distributed Queen Anne style house plans through mail-order catalogues and the monthly magazine *American Homes*, preceding the popular Sears pattern house kits by a decade. An estimated 10,000 “Barber houses” were built in the United States, Canada, and Japan (Jones 1996:253, 341).

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the French architect Paul Cret at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a Certificate of Proficiency in Architecture. Charles returned to Knoxville and worked for several architects including his father before forming a partnership in 1915 with his cousin David West Barber (D. West Barber) and Ben F. McMurry (both also graduates of Cret's program). When George Barber died later that year, the fledgling firm of Barber & McMurry Architects absorbed the elder architect's business. The firm gained a reputation designing award-winning elegant country manors for wealthy patrons, with Charles Barber as principal designer, McMurry as business manager, and D. West Barber preparing the working drawings. Its residential commissions ran the gamut of early twentieth-century revival styles from Tudor to Mediterranean. Barber's work drew on historical American and European prototypes, incorporating Beaux Arts principles with functional layouts. He collaborated often with local landscape architect Charles Lester, who designed lavish gardens. Prominent Knoxville homes designed by the firm include the Alex Bonnyman House (1916), the Calvin Holmes House (1922), and the John Craig House (1926).<sup>20</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1920s, Barber & McMurry Architects expanded its portfolio into designs for many public buildings, primarily schools and churches but also commercial buildings such as hotels and offices. Examples include the Bank of Knoxville (1926), Sequoyah Elementary School (1929), the Knoxville YMCA (1930), and Maryville High School (1933). The firm designed the majority of buildings at the main University of Tennessee campus in Knoxville, starting with the 1930 Hoskins Library. The entire June 1930 issue of *Southern Architect and Building News* covered the firm's work, and a 1938 brochure published by the Knoxville Small House Bureau included several of its small house designs. During the 1930s, the firm worked on several New Deal agency projects in addition to the buildings in Great Smoky Mountains NP. As Chief Architect for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) from 1935 to 1936, Barber designed low- and mid-cost housing for the agency's Norris, Pickwick, and Wheeler Dam sites. He is also associated with the designs for NPS buildings constructed in 1941 at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. After collaborating with the noted New York architect John Russell Pope on the design for the Church Street Methodist Church in Knoxville, the firm became known as a specialist in church architecture throughout the Southeast. The last of the partners left the firm in 1969, but the business

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<sup>20</sup> Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, 2015, "Barber & McMurry Architects," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. 13 Jul 2015. <http://www.tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=54>.

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continues to operate in Knoxville under the name of BarberMcMurry with a recent emphasis on healthcare-related commissions.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jones, *The Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee*, 173; Superintendent's Monthly Reports, October 1938; July 1939; "Final Report on the Construction of the Secondary Administration Building, Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Mingus Creek, North Carolina," Typescript, n.d., Park Maintenance Files, 1-6

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Blythe, Robert W. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Park Development Historic District." 1998 draft. On file, Great Smoky Mountains NP Archives.

Blythe, Robert W., Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Kings Mountain National Military Park." York County, SC, November 16, 1994, NRIS #75001777.

Daly, John, and Laura Kline. *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Historic Resource Study*. Report prepared for National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, GA, by The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Pawtucket, RI, 2015.

Harper, Marilyn M. and Linda McClelland. Preliminary Review, Oconaluftee Ranger Station—Visitor Center, Draft National Register Nomination. On file, Great Smoky Mountains NP Archives, Box No. 80235, Box 2 of 2, Folder "Oconaluftee Visitor Center," January 23, 1992.

Jones, Robbie D. *The Historic Architecture of Sevier County, Tennessee*. Sevierville, TN: The Smoky Mountain Historical Society, 1996.

Mitchell, Ruthanne Livaditis, and Rene Cote. *Historic Structure Report: Oconaluftee Ranger Station/Visitor Center, Swain County, North Carolina, Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, Atlanta, GA. On file, Great Smoky Mountains NP Archives, Box No. 80235, Box 2 of 2, Folder "Oconaluftee Visitor Center," 1990.

Olausen, Stephen, John Daly, and Laura Kline. *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Historic Resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Prepared for National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, GA, by The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Pawtucket, RI. 2016.

Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture. "Barber & McMurry Architects," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 13 Jul 2015, <http://www.tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=54>.

Trout, Edward L. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Secondary Administration Building." Revised draft dated October 20, 1992. On file, Great Smoky Mountains NP Archives, Box No. 80235, Box 2 of 2, Folder "Oconaluftee Visitor Center."

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National Park Service Archives and Repositories  
Denver Service Center, Denver CO  
    Technical Information Center (TIC)  
Southeast Support Office, Atlanta, GA  
    Drawings on microfiche, Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, TN  
    Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Office  
    Headquarters Building  
        Building Maintenance Files  
Park Archives  
    General Reports, Emergency Conservation Work  
    Grossman, Charles S., Collection  
    Master Plan Studies Collection, various dates, 1930s, 1942  
    Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1932-1937  
    Superintendent's Monthly Reports, May 1931-October 1959  
Park Library  
    Vertical Files

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** 2.13

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Latitude: 35.514945 | Longitude: -83.306778 |
| B. Latitude: 35.514888 | Longitude: -83.306580 |
| C. Latitude: 35.513657 | Longitude: -83.305575 |
| D. Latitude: 35.513586 | Longitude: -83.306833 |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The 2.13-acre Oconaluftee Ranger Station property is bounded on the north and east by the Oconaluftee River, on the west by US Route 441, and on the south by the edge of the historic associated parking area, as shown on the attached sketch map.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass all known historic resources associated with the property as well as its historic setting. They include all extant landscape features developed as part of the property in the late 1930s, as determined by consulting the historic master plans and site plans.

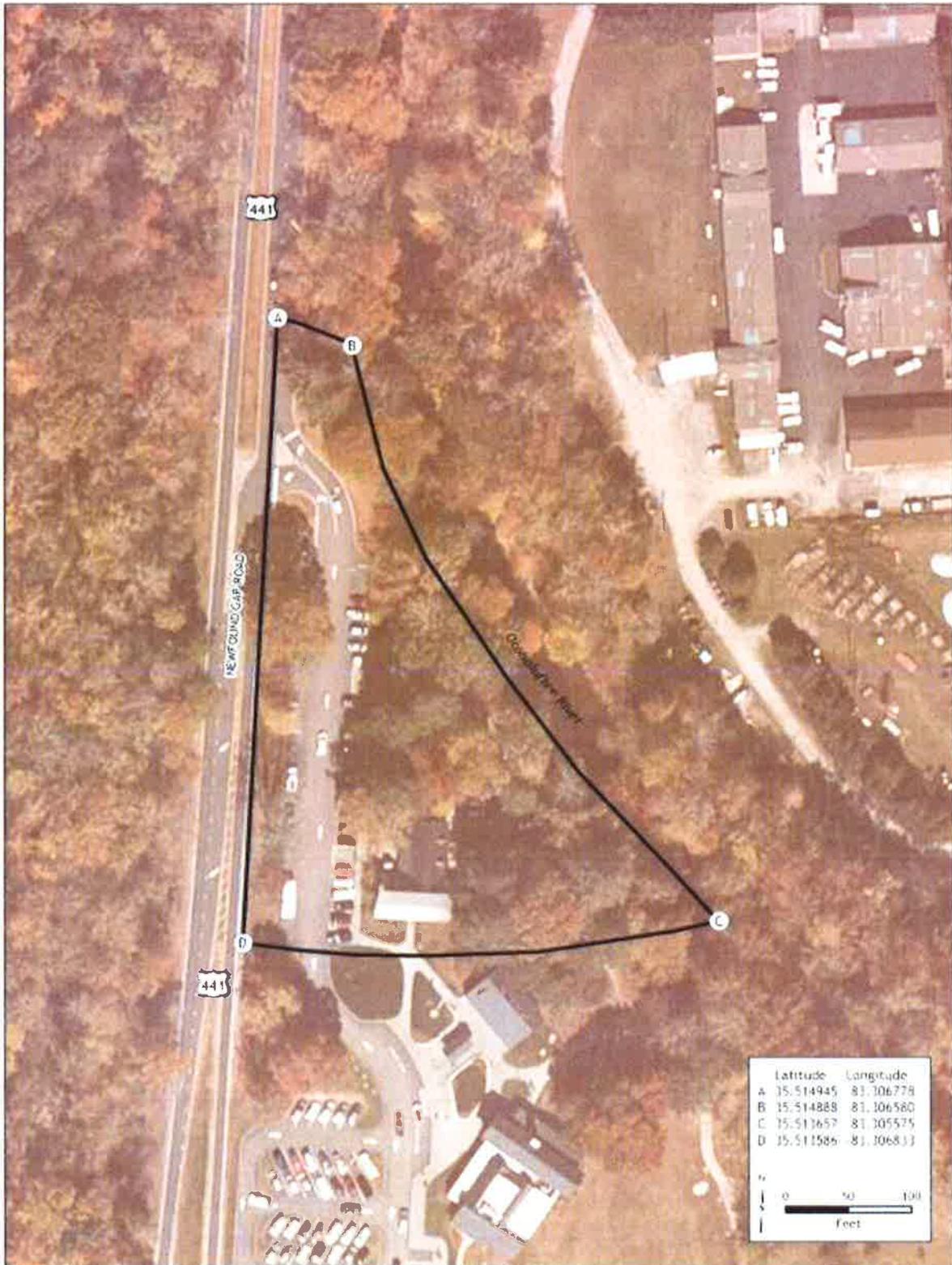
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## 11. Form Prepared By

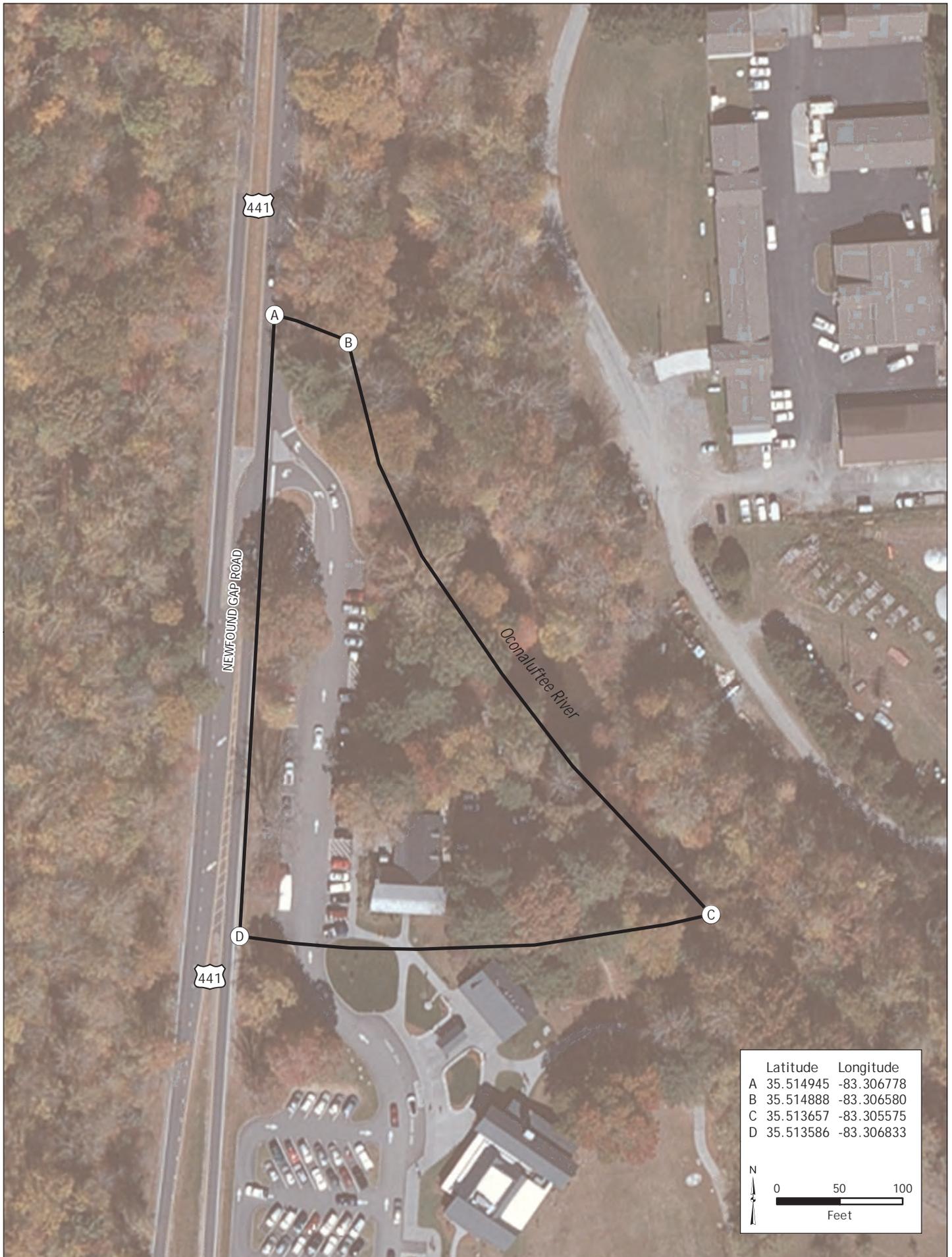
name/title: Laura Kline/Architectural Historian  
organization: Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL)  
street & number: 26 Main Street  
city or town: Pawtucket state: RI zip code: 02860  
e-mail: lkline@palinc.com  
telephone: 401-728-8780  
date: April 2016

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Oconaluftee Ranger Station, Great Smoky Mountains National Park Coordinate Map



Oconaluftee Ranger Station, Great Smoky Mountains National Park Coordinate Map

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Oconaluftee Ranger Station

City or Vicinity: Cherokee

County: Swain

State: NC

Photographer: John Daly, PAL

Date Photographed: December 2, 2014 (except Photo #12, April 9, 2013)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13. Oconaluftee Ranger Station, south and west elevations, looking northeast.

2 of 13. Oconaluftee Ranger Station, north and west elevations, looking southeast.

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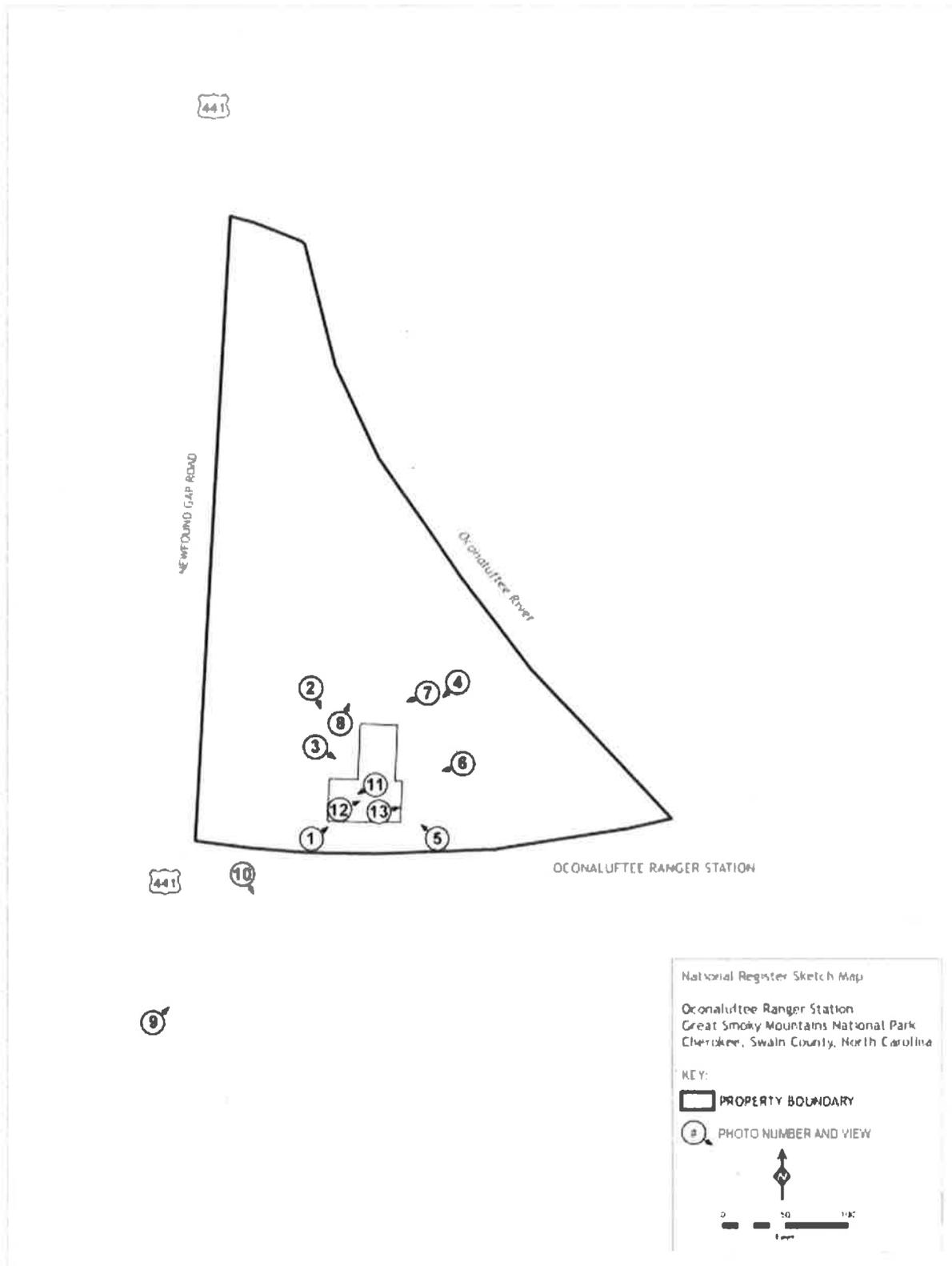
- 3 of 13. Oconaluftee Ranger Station, north and west elevations, looking southeast at junction of main block and rear ell.
- 4 of 13. Oconaluftee Ranger Station, north and east elevations, looking southwest.
- 5 of 13. Oconaluftee Ranger Station, south and east elevations, looking northwest.
- 6 of 13. Retaining wall extending from east elevation, looking southwest.
- 7 of 13. Stone terraces and steps at north end with lower drinking fountain, looking southwest.
- 8 of 13. Upper drinking fountain, looking due north.
- 9 of 13. View of site looking northeast from median of Newfound Gap Road: original parking area to left of building, Oconaluftee Comfort Station and flagpole to right.
- 10 of 13. View from entrance to original parking area, looking south toward Oconaluftee Visitor Center and south parking lot with Comfort Station and flagpole at left.
- 10 of 13. View from entrance to original parking area, looking south toward Oconaluftee Visitor Center and south parking lot with Comfort Station and flagpole at left.
- 11 of 13. Interior, Oconaluftee Ranger Station, great room, looking southwest.
- 12 of 13. Interior, Oconaluftee Ranger Station, great room, looking northeast.
- 13 of 13. Interior, Oconaluftee Ranger Station, east wall of conference room, looking northeast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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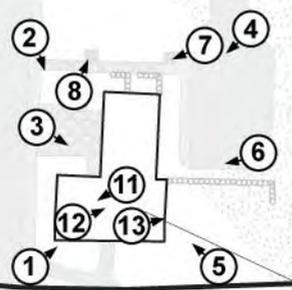


Oconaluftee Ranger Station Sketch Map.

NEWFOUND GAP ROAD

Oconaluftee River

OCONALUFTEE RANGER STATION



National Register Sketch Map

Oconaluftee Ranger Station  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Cherokee, Swain County, North Carolina

KEY:

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- PHOTO NUMBER AND VIEW

0 50 100  
Feet

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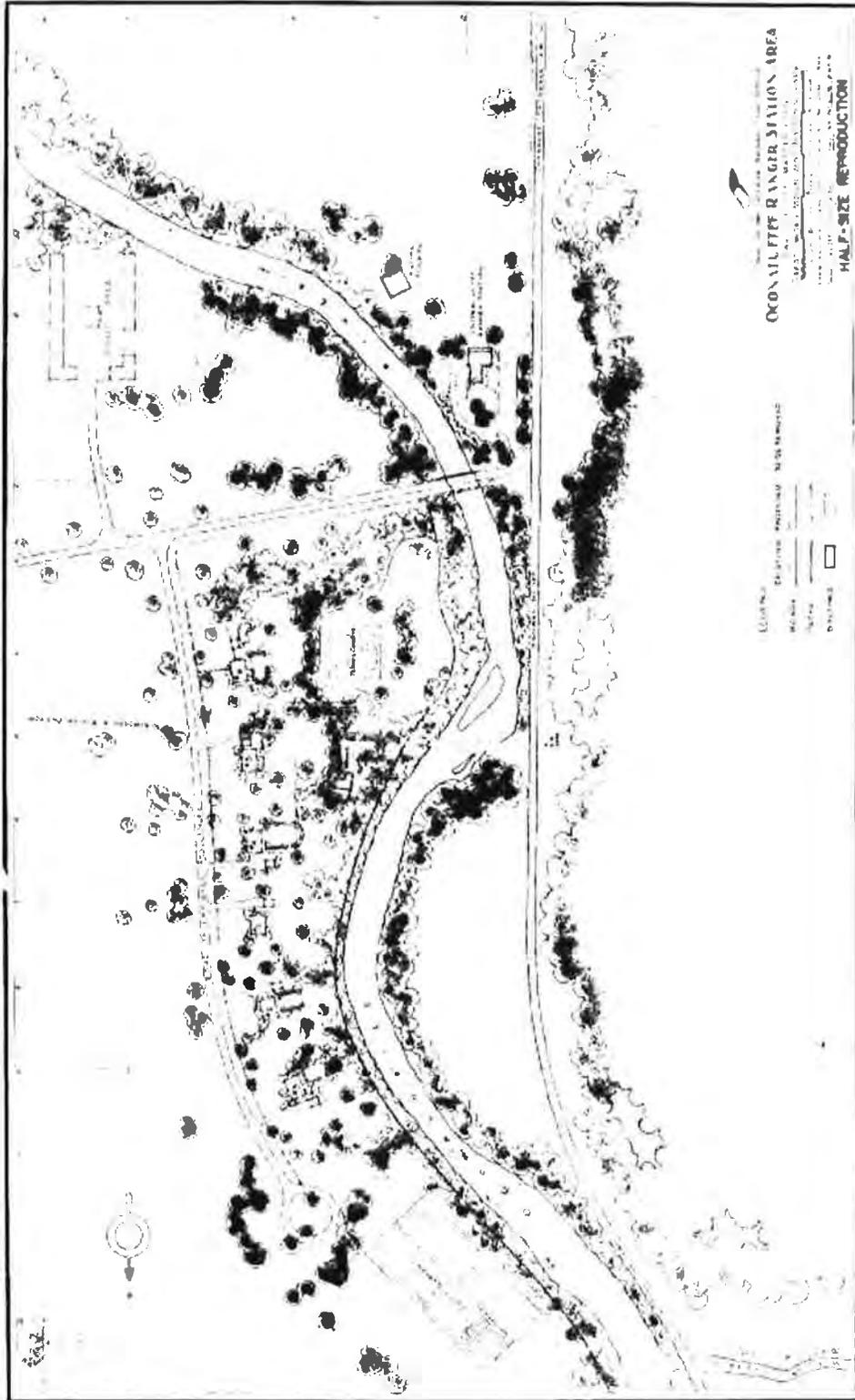


Figure 1. Oconaluftee Ranger Station Area. Drawing NP-GSM 2165B, 1942 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).

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Figure 2. Photograph of Oconaluftee Ranger Station during construction, front, n.d. Neg. No. 1487 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).



Figure 3. Photograph of Oconaluftee Ranger Station during construction, east side, n.d. Neg. No. 1488 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).

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Figure 4. Photograph of Oconaluftee Ranger Station during construction, rear and east side, n.d. Neg. No. 1491 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).



Figure 5. Photograph of Oconaluftee Ranger Station during construction, west side, n.d. Neg. No. 1490 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).

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Figure 6. Photograph of Oconaluftee Ranger Station, front, n.d. Neg. No. 1474 (source: Great Smoky Mountains NP, Gatlinburg, TN).

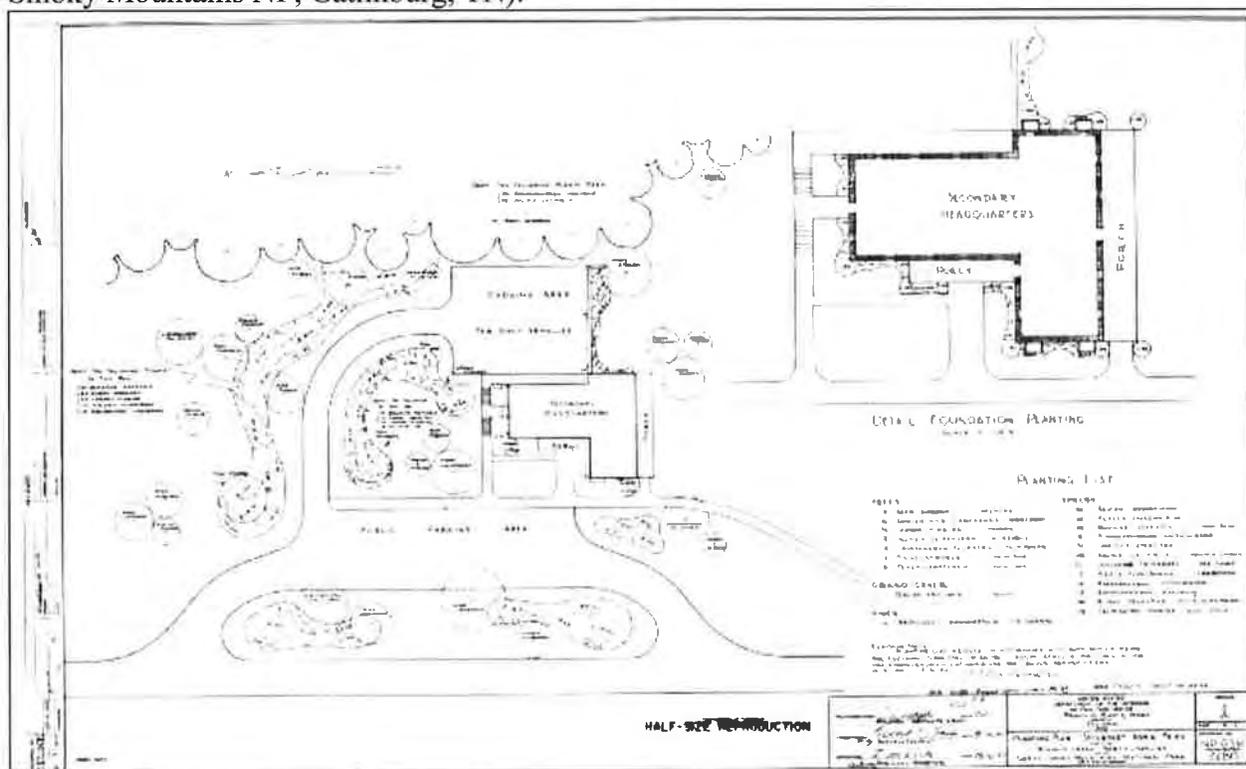


Figure 7. Planting Plan, Oconaluftee Ranger Station. Drawing NP-GSM 2280, 1940 (source: NPS Technical Information Center, Denver, CO).









Chapel Hill  
North Carolina  
1792

Chapel Hill  
North Carolina  
1792

Chapel Hill  
North Carolina  
1792





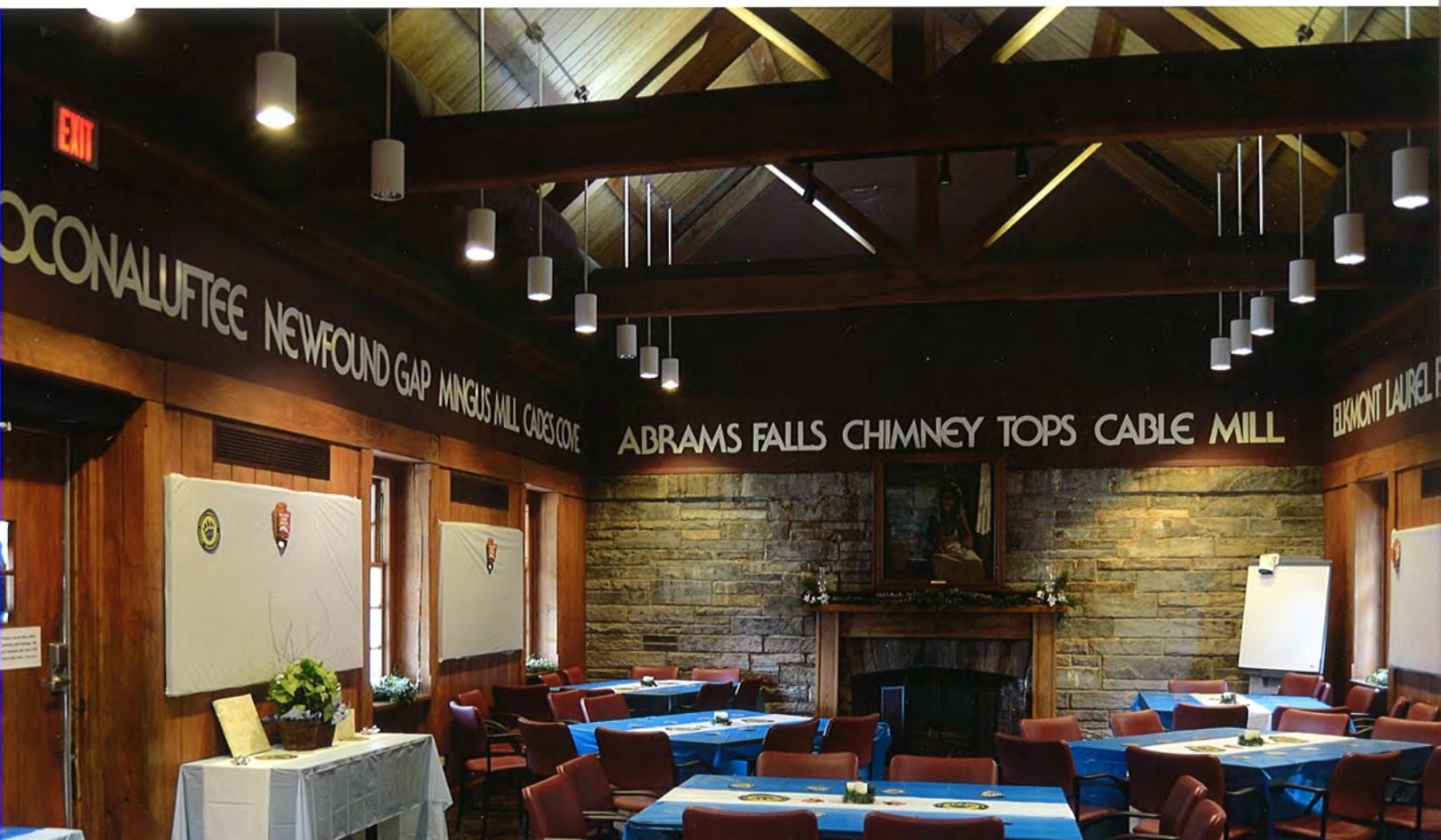








O'CONNELL  
VISITOR CENTER



EXIT

CONALUFTEE NEWFOUND GAP MINGUS MILL CADES COVE

ABRAMS FALLS CHIMNEY TOPS CABLE MILL

EKMONT LAUREL P

EXIT  
MANS DOME MT. LE CONTE GROTT© FALLS BALSAM MTN. RAMSEY CASCADE COSBY CATALOOCHEE

