

### CCC/WPA SUMMARY

Des Lacs NWR is a narrow corridor refuge, established in 1935 to include a stretch of wooded coulees, river bottom marshes, and grassy uplands along the Des Lacs River. The refuge begins at the Canadian border and extends south for approximately 30 miles. Migratory waterfowl, deer, coyotes, and sharp-tailed grouse are the principle occupants. The Des Lacs NWR encompasses more than 19,500 acres.

The camp was established here to carry on the restoration and development of the Des Lacs and Lostwood Migratory Waterfowl Refuges. . . . The Bureau of Biological Survey, by the construction of earth dams and control structures, is attempting to control the runoff and form a number of large marsh areas where the fowl may breed and feed. These structures, together with the Refuge buildings at both Des Lacs and Lostwood, were built of concrete.

**Years CCC/WPA on refuge:** July 15, 1935- May 1942. WPA – two weeks in June, 1940 a small WPA crew (15 men) was employed for first time on the refuge; NYA 2 boys, April and May, 1940.

**Camp:** Des Lacs Camp BF-3, Kenmare, North Dakota, 797<sup>th</sup> Co. CCC "is housed in a permanent camp in what was formerly the Kenmare City Ball Park, located at the northeastern part of town. The camp's official Army name is Camp Sam G. Anderson" (see camp map). Company was usually at its full complement of about 200 enrollees. Company sponsored dances, a bowling team, boxing, baseball, and published Company Newspaper – *Pine Tree Tribune*.

Educational building included a new jig saw and they taught classes for high school credit. New enrollees joining in October 1936 were mostly city boys, not as well acquainted with tools or work.

**Group/Company:** Company 797 has had a varied existence, being one of the original CCC Companies, and has the distinction of having served under four Federal Using Service Agencies. It was organized at Fort Lincoln, North Dakota about May 25<sup>th</sup> 1933 under the command of Captain Sullivan of the Regular Army and sent to Jamestown, North Dakota where they went to work for the Soil Erosion Service, June 5, 1933. Captain C. J. Bakken, our present Commander, took over command September 20, 1933. The company then moved to Devils Den, Arkansas, October 12, 1933 to operate under the State Park Service. May 1, 1934 they returned to Watford City, North Dakota under the Soil Erosion Service and on October 15, 1934 they moved to Big Fork, Minnesota under the U.S. Forest Service. Company was moved to Kenmare, North Dakota July 15, 1935 and established Camp Sam G. Anderson in the town of Kenmare. Captain Bakken continued to command the company. In 1936, L. W. Lansing was named Project Superintendent.

#### **Work projects:**

This work has involved the grading, landscaping, building drives, painting the headquarters buildings, planting trees and shrubs, and building walks. We have excavated channels for control of water, built nesting islands, fish traps, rip-rapped banks, built patrol trails, repaired bridges, fed birds, carried on

May 1937: Began construction of warehouse on the Welsch property. Surveyed new location of lookout tower, began survey of picnic grounds in Tasker's Coulee.

July 1937: Relocated lookout tower on hill near the golf course. Lowering water pipes at headquarters and adding telephone conduit in same trench, from 2 ft to 9 ft deep. Plans and detailed drawings were made and forwarded to the Minot office on our picnic area, plans returned because they were too elaborate. Plans were re-drawn and submitted after conference among Mr. Gillett, Mr. Low, Mr. Jurgens. Built wood box storm windows for residence.

\*\*July 1937 — end of 9<sup>th</sup> enrollment period rule in place limiting enrollees to 2-years of service. This ruling had a profound effect on camps where 1/3 to 1/2 of the men had to be terminated.

August 1937: Truck trails, relocating lookout tower, installing box storm windows on residence completed. Representatives of the Direct Advertising Company, Baton Rouge, Louisiana were in camp this month and took pictures for the North Dakota District Annual. About 30 pictures were taken and nearly every man ordered one.

September 1937: Mr. Seth Low married. Company strength decreased to only 71. Looked for location for lookout tower #2. Truck trail repairs, new culverts, re-ditching. Fence repair. Built riprap retaining walls for loading platform at warehouse.

January 1938: New commanding officer, Mr. Harper. The Welsch sub-headquarters house was completed. Began work clearing coulee for picnic area, but Mr. Low stopped them. "The old brick yard in the mouth of Tasker's Coulee. . . has been cleaned up". Repairing #3 dam. Building rubble arch culverts (photo).

February 1938: Commanding officer Mr. Hammond. Mr. Olander, acting camp Superintendent.

July-Aug. 1938: Russell Hopper Commanding officer, Ralph Olander camp superintendent. Warehouse cleaned to provide room for camp supplies moved from the abandoned Mohall Camp.

September 1938: Packing, sorting, and transporting surplus property from Mohall to District warehouse.

Refuge Narrative Annual Report 1938: Swenson secondary buildings – two sets of plans have been submitted, still no decision on whether to remodel existing house or build new. Helle Secondary building, work will begin recondition house. Second lookout tower erected on west side of the Upper Des Lacs Lake.

April-May 1939: Working on picnic shelter, rubble masonry and log structure.

June-July 1939: Lawrence Golobich Commanding officer. Levelled off soft-bali diamond and playground area. 35 guard rail posts were placed on the entrance road as a safety precaution on a curve and steep embankment. Picnic shelter nearly complete. Helping with bird counts, banding, etc.

Refuge Narrative Annual Report 1939: Duck hospital constructed, but job not well done. Land acquisitions required additional fencing. Built two latrines at picnic grounds, fire places not holding up and need to be rebuilt. Planting trees in rows as shelter belts, planting seed plants.

Refuge Narrative Annual Report 1940: Maintenance of buildings, roads, fences, dams consuming large amount of CCC time. Des Lacs also had District Warehouse for supplies, a duck hospital, and Tasker's Coulee recreational area. Camp also worked on Lostwood refuge; spent several months building a highway across the Upper Souris Refuge at the Mouse River Park; and expended many man-days from August to Mid-September on botulism control.

Feb -March 1940: 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CCC held April 7<sup>th</sup>. About 300 people attended. Dam 2 spillway completed. CCC have done a very excellent job. Rock and gravel coating on Dam 3 spillover completed. Beginning to talk about camp leaving. "Other important jobs to be taken care of . . . before the CCC Camp departs are: the raising of the dams 4-5 ft; raising low spots in Highway 52; construction of a telephone line from Lakeshore via the Swenson Patrol Cabin to Tower #2; completion of coulee dam #2; painting and finishing buildings; raising and riprapping islands; building fence; construction of loading ramps; drilling a well; etc.

May-July 1940: Working on water line to Welsch sub-headquarters, completed chicken coop. Added culverts to roads; continued fencing; salvage James Larson buildings; planting trees, no work on duck hospital. WPA crew of about 15 men worked for two weeks improving the drainage on the truck trail from Baden north on the west side for about 1 ½ miles. Crew resumed work under the state-wide 3600 project – regrading the parking and drive at headquarters. NYA – two local farm boys have put in about two days work a week keeping the Tasker's Coulee Recreational Area in shape. Their duties include keeping all the rubbish picked up and emptying rubbish barrels as needed, hauling and stacking wood for the fireplaces, sweeping and cleaning the rest rooms, liming the vaults, and keeping toilet paper on the rolls. They have also maintained the entrance road by hand and set up posts to sub-divide the parking area to provide more parking space.

July, Aug, Sept. 1940: building Northgate Coulee rubble masonry dam.

Nov-Dec 1940, Jan 1941: "The completion of the physical development of the Des Lacs Refuge is now well within sight. Work expected to be completed by July, 1941. No need for the services of the WPA and CCC after October 1, 1941." Seth Low complained about the last year's worth of work: "Progress by this agency during the past period, and for that matter the past year, with the most liberal allowances for a lack of operating funds, has been most disappointing to this writer. It would appear that expediency has given way to doing things the hard, long way in order to provide and prolong work for the large available labor supply. The best indication of this is found in the handling of two jobs, the raising of dams and ditching in the units. . . . The CCC proposed to raise the dams by hand and . . . destroyed valuable nesting cover when the CCC obtained fill for the dam in an area that was supposed to be protected. Details other problems, such as poor work on water system at Welsch place.

Jan, Feb, March 1942: Last CCC narrative report. Just received word that camp to be disbanded May 26<sup>th</sup>. North dike work stopped; water control structure installed beneath Bowbells bridge; repairing water system at Welsch place, construction of a new duck hospital, planting trees. Mr. Kent, refuge manager, was called to active duty in the Army March 14.

Refuge Managers: 1935? Seth Low 1937-1942; Frank Van Kent 1941-1942; Eric B. Lawson 1942-

Resource Types	Description	Integrity/ Condition	Eligibility
Lookout Towers	Two towers, #1 was built behind office, then moved to across river near golf course; #2 build near Des Lacs Lake.	Demo	
Patrol Truck Trails	Built about 65 miles of graded, gravelled road through refuge.		
Fencing –	Refuge boundary and some interior fencing.		
Loading ramp	Rubble masonry, built near CCC district warehouse which has been demolished.		

### Refuge Development (such as water control structures, erosion control, and landscaping)

Resource Types	Description	Integrity/ Condition	Eligibility
<b>Lower Des Lacs Lake Dam</b> (32WD1537) – Was constructed in the late 1930s by the CCC Company 797.	"The dam is an earth fill structure with a stone rubble spillway, characteristic of Depression-era CCC and WPA dam construction in North Dakota during those years. The spillway was reinforced on its downstream side with poured concrete walls and release gates sometime in the 1980s" (Morrison et al. 2000:92). Structure is the lowest of the dams in the Des Lacs NWR.	Good	Eligible, (Morrison 2000)
Dams	Eight dams on Des Lacs River to form ponds.		
Coulee Dams	Six Dams on Coulees		

### Wildlife Structures (such as duck hospital, fish ladder, etc.)

Resource Types	Description	Integrity/ Condition	Eligibility
Duck Hospital, 1942	Earlier duck hospital not satisfactory, replaced in 1942, both CCC – like plan for Long Lake (Check plans)	?	
Upland Bird Shelters	J.C. Salyer recommended building these structures to protect upland birds.		
In-stream structures	Cobble formations for fish to use as protection, resting		

### Archaeological (such as CCC camps)

Resource Types	Description	Integrity/ Condition	Eligibility
Camp BS-3	Camp in city park in Kenmare, not on refuge.		

Record Type	Description	Notes (Curation Needs, research)
Oral histories		
Other (County Museum, CCC group, etc)		

### References

#### CCC Records

1936-1941 Des Lacs Camp BF-3, CCC Company 797, Kenmare, North Dakota. On-file at Des Lacs NWR, Kenmare, North Dakota.

#### Des Lacs NWR Narratives

1936-1942 Narratives and Annual Reports filed by refuge staff. Reports on-file at refuge, Kenmare, North Dakota.

Morrison, John G. with contributions by Louis Hafermehl, Michael McFaul, and Amy Holmes

2000 *Mud, Bugs and an Old Trail: A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory of Forty Miles of US Highway 52, in Renville and Ward Counties, North Dakota.* Prepared for: Kadrmass, Lee & Jackson P.C., Bismarck. Prepared by: Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Bismarck.

#### *Pine Tree Tribune*

1936 Newspaper published by Co. 797 CCC, Kenmare, N.D. Volume 3, No. 1. May 25, 1936.

### Attachments

☒ Photographs ☐ Site Form ☐ Condition Assessment Form ☒ Site Plan Map ☒ Blueprint Plans  
☐ Other

### Information Update Log

Form Prepared: 5 July 2000

Information Updated:

Prepared By: Lou Ann Speulda and Rhoda Lewis

Updated By:



Figure 1. Des Lacs NWR, Service Building.  
(From Refuge Narrative Report, September 1936).



Figure 2. Des Lacs NWR, Service Building, 2000.

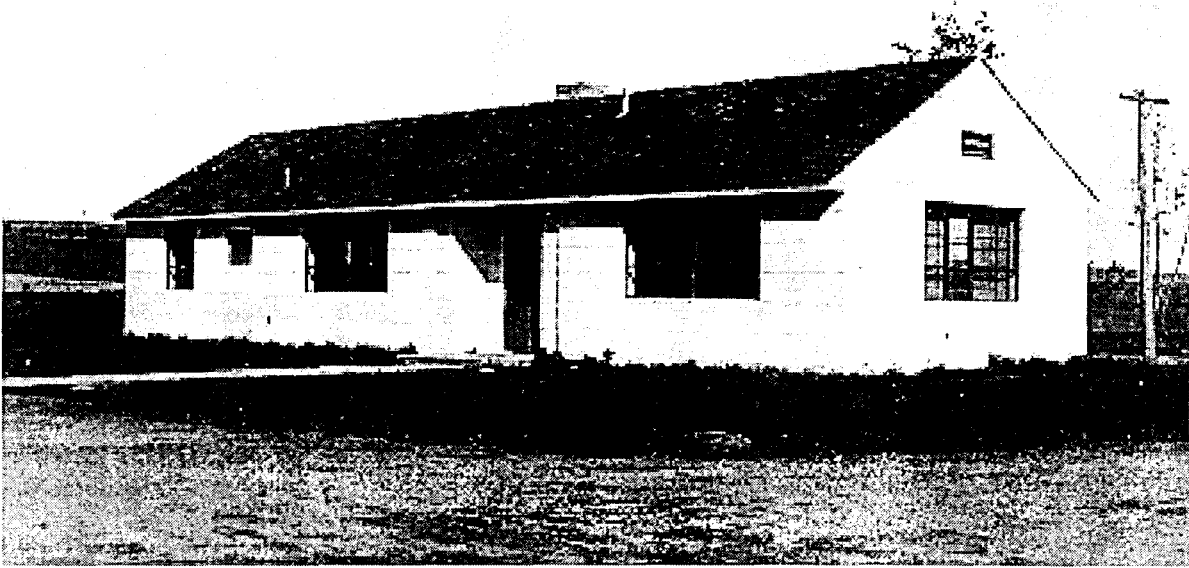


Figure 3. Des Lacs NWR, Lab/Office, (front).  
(From Refuge Narrative Report, September 1936).

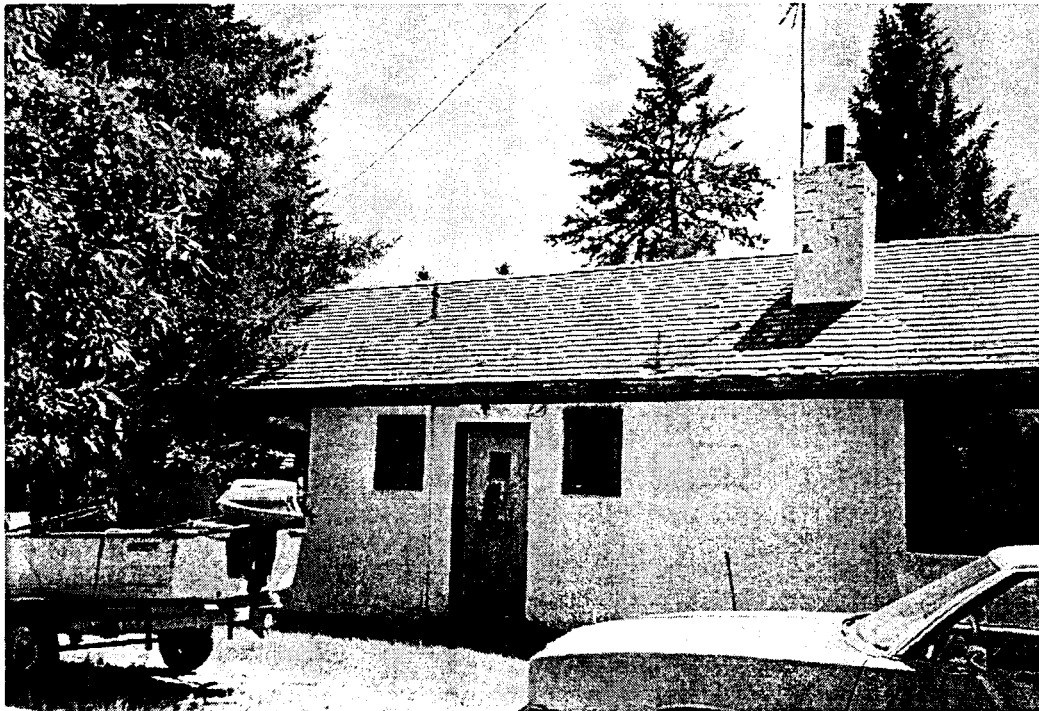


Figure 4. Des Lacs NWR, Lab/Office (rear), 2000.

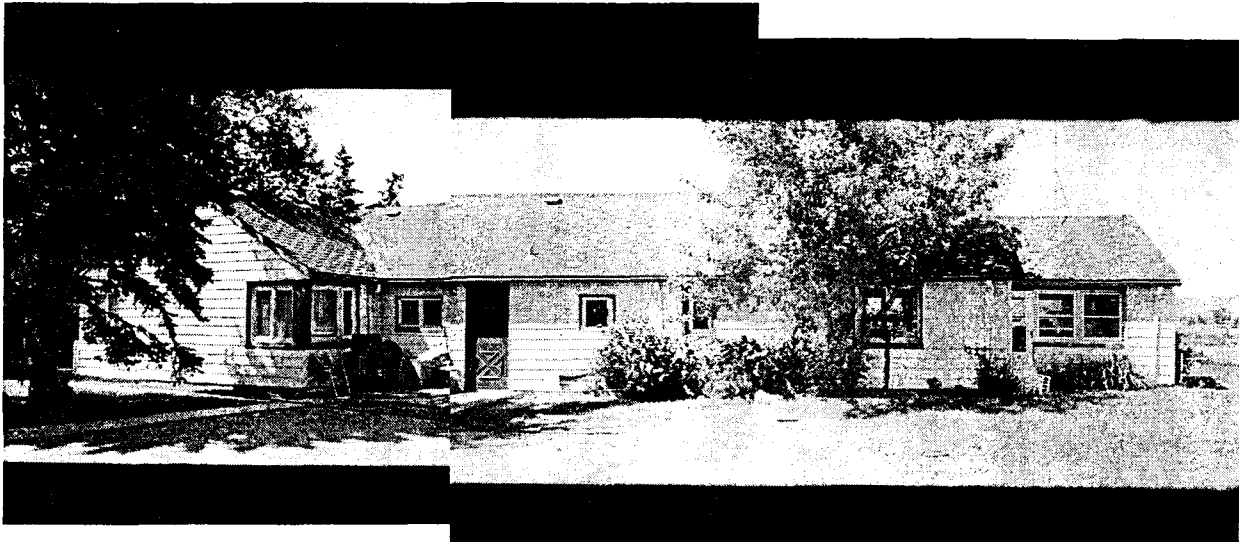


Figure 7. Des Lacs NWR, Residence, (rear), 2000.



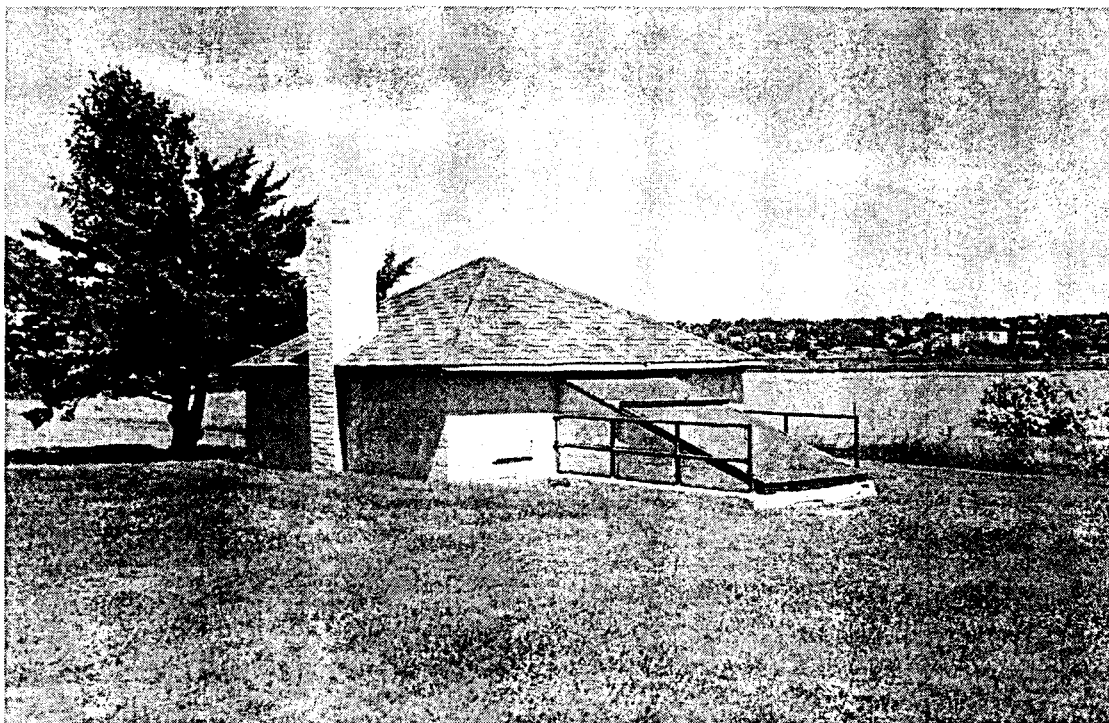


Figure 8. Des Lacs NWR, Pumphouse.

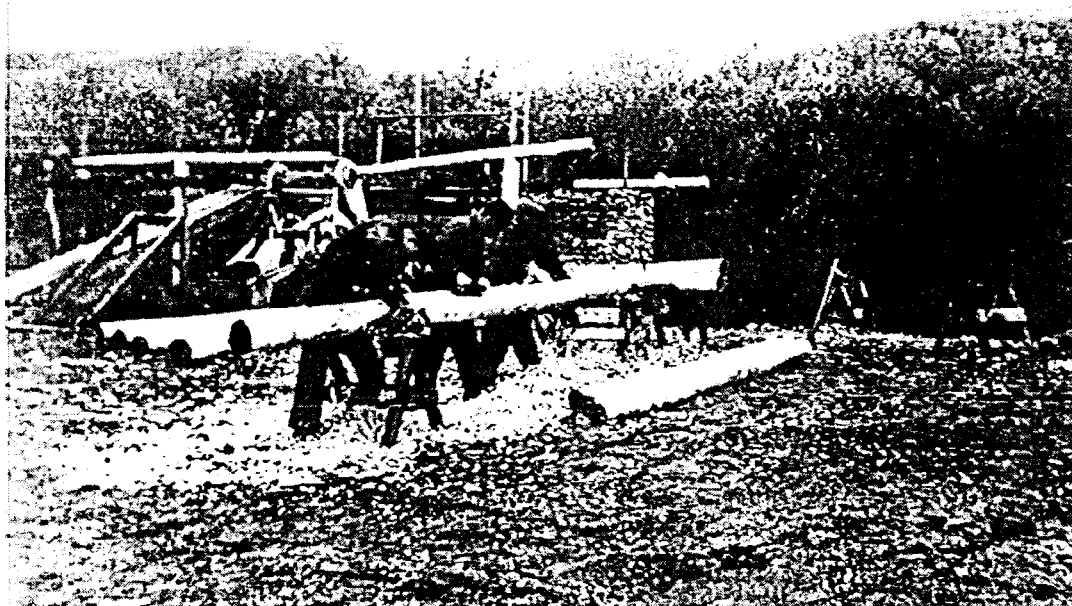


Figure 9. Tasker's Picnic shelter under construction.  
(From CCC Narrative Report, April & May 1939, pg. 26).

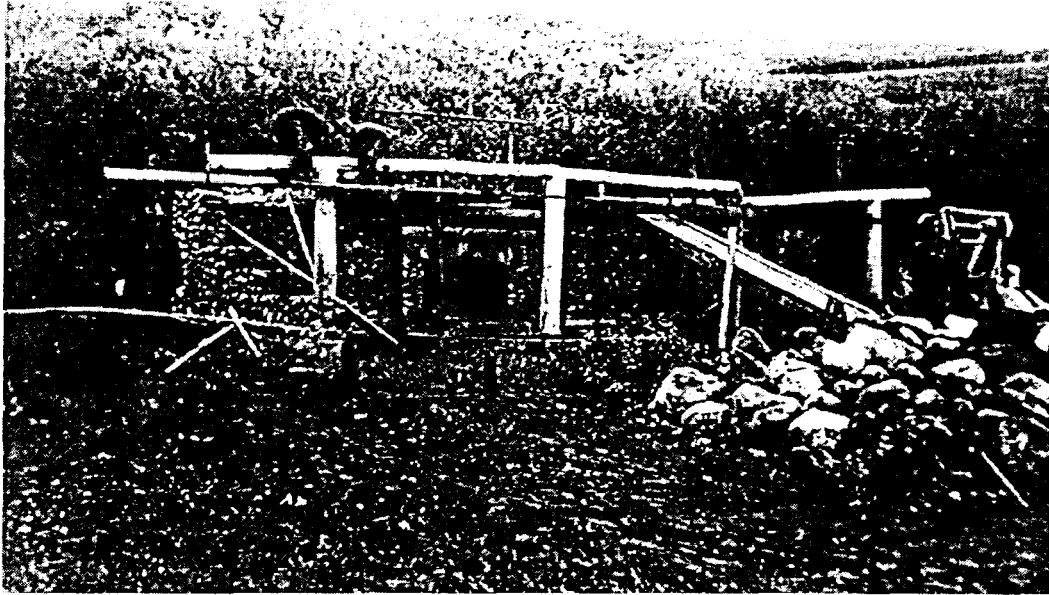


Figure 10. Tasker's Coulee Picnic Shelter, under construction.  
(From CCC Narrative Report, April & May 1939, pg. 26).

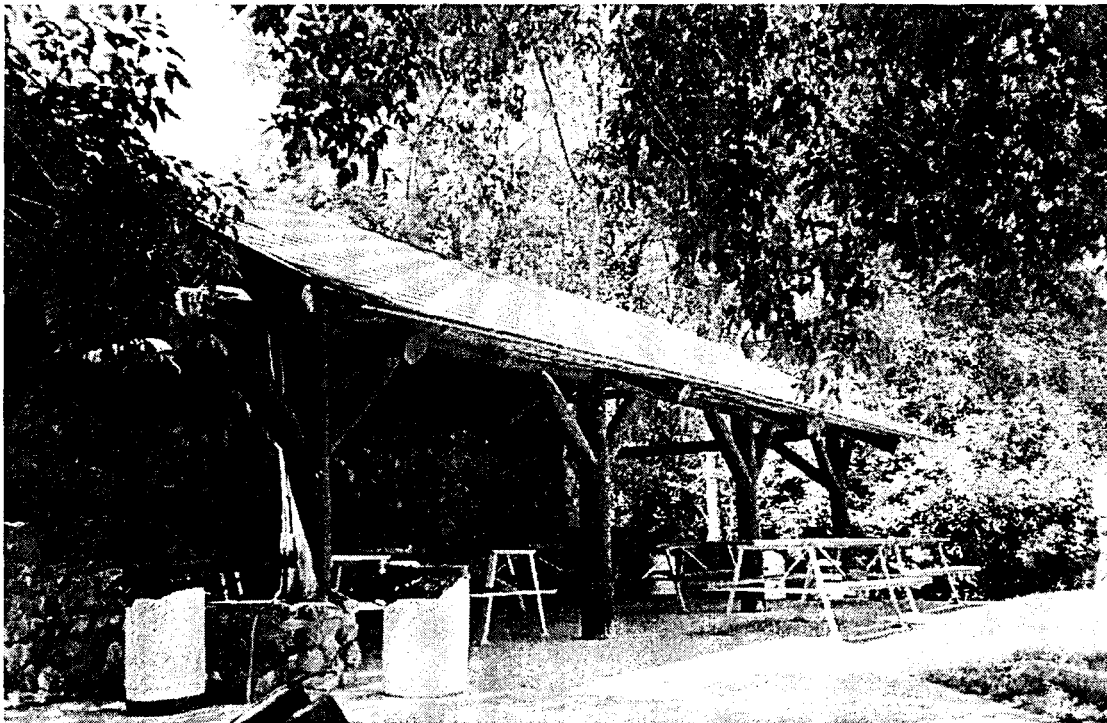


Figure 11. Tasker's Coulee Picnic Shelter, ca. 2000.



Figure 12. Tasker's Coulee Picnic Shelter, note wall construction, Des Lacs NWR.

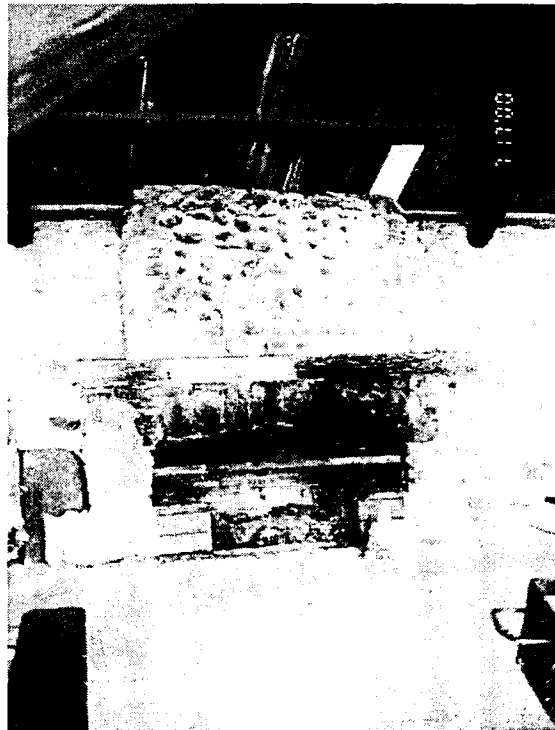


Figure 13. Interior of picnic shelter, Des Lacs NWR.