OREGON STATE FORESTER'S OFFICE COMPLEX
2600 State Street
Salem
Marion County
Oregon

HABS OR-186
OR-186

HABS
OR-186

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
OREGON STATE FORESTER'S COMPLEX
HABS No. OR-186

Location: 2600 State Street
Salem
Marion County
Oregon

Date of Construction: Various (1936-Present)

Architect: Various

Builders: CCC, WPA, and Oregon State Department of Forestry

Present Owners: Oregon State Department of Forestry

Present Use: Various

Significance: The Oregon State Forester's Complex is significant within the state context as a good example of WPA-era complex planning and development. It is also significant for the high quality of workmanship on specific buildings and structures within the complex. The complex contains buildings and structures constructed by both WPA and CCC forces, and continues in its use as a central facility for the Oregon Department of Forestry. The complex, through its buildings and site features, evokes its association with the New Deal Era programs that were utilized during its construction. The CCC camp buildings, on the east side of Mill Creek, were completed by April of 1937 and the original Department of Forestry buildings on the west side of the creek were built between March and December of 1938. The complex encompasses over 11 acres and reflects both the original development patterns established in the 1930s and the subsequent development of the complex as an administrative headquarters.

Report Prepared By: Alex McMurry, Cultural Resources Specialist
Oregon Department of Transportation, Salem, OR.

Date: August, 2004

I. DESCRIPTION

General description of complex

The Oregon State Forester's Complex encompasses eleven acres on the south side of State Street in Salem. The complex is bounded by the former railroad corridor to the south and east and by new commercial development to the west. Mill Creek divides the complex into two parts, connected by the Mill Creek Bridge. To the north and west of the creek are the Administration, Forest Protection, Forest Management, Automotive Shop, Motor Pool / Break Room, the Douglas Fir Interpretive Log, and the small Stone Building (described below), all constructed by the end of 1938. The remaining buildings, described below and completed in 1937, sit to the south and east of the creek. The buildings are arranged in organized groups, with the Administration Building and Keep Oregon Green Building separate from the more utilitarian structures. These support buildings are arranged in rows with access and paved parking in the areas between the buildings. The site is generally flat, with lawns between the building groups and State Street. Mature trees are present within the complex at various locations, but most are located near the creek.

Building and Structure Descriptions

A) Oregon State Forester's Office Building / Administration Building

The Oregon State Forester's Office Building sits near the center of the northern edge of the complex. This building, completed and occupied in December 1938, was designed by U.S. Forest Service architects and constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. The Office Building is the premier example of rustic architecture within the complex. The building has a roughly L-shaped plan, with the short leg of the "L" under a hip roof and the long leg under a gable on hip roof. Gabled rectangular bays project out from the north building façade. A series of hipped dormers are present on both sides of the two primary roofs. The building is primarily clad with horizontal lap siding, and the area below the window sills is clad with basalt. The two northern bays are clad with basalt, with the eastern bay fully clad in stone and the western bay with board and batten siding in the gable end. The eastern bay contains the State Forester's Office, and has set of three timber framed windows under a stylized tree motif (also created in basalt) in the gable end. The main entry to the building is recessed just west of this bay, and is framed by heavy timbers. A basalt flagstone walk leads up to the entry. A massive stone chimney is located on the east side of the Forester's Office, with a small window on the south side of the hearth and a tree motif about halfway up the chimney. The windows at the ground floor are primarily eight over eight double hung wood sash, but larger eighteen light wood sash windows are located in the eastern bay of the north façade. The dormers typically feature paired twelve light casement sashes. The building interior is also significant for its use of native Oregon woods and the delicate carvings at the staircase. The building utilizes native materials throughout, typical of the National Park Service Rustic Style.

B) Forest Protection Building

This side gabled rectangular building is oriented in roughly east-west. It is a 1 ½ story building clad with horizontal lap siding at the first floor level and vertical board and batten siding in the gable ends. Two gabled dormers are present on both the north and south sides of the building, also clad with board and batten siding. The roof is covered with wood shingles, and the eaves are open to expose the purlins in the main gable and the rafter tails in the dormers. The dormers

are located near the center of the building. A concrete stair leads into the main entry near the east end of the north façade. The windows are typically sliding aluminum sashes with narrow plain board trim. A steel staircase on the west end of the building provides exterior access to the second floor. Small air conditioning units have been added to the east and west ends of the building, both near the south side.

C) Forest Management Building

This two story rectangular building was initially constructed as a single story structure, and the second floor and flat roof were added in 1957. The building is oriented east-west, and the flat roof is cantilevered out beyond the exterior walls. A small flat cornice mirrors the main roof overhang on the north side of the first floor level. The building is clad with horizontal lap siding, finished with cornerboards. The windows are predominantly large fixed panes over sliding sashes, appearing both singly (primarily on the east and west ends of the building) and in pairs (on the north and south elevations). A small shed roof covers the eastern and southern entries to the building, while the northern entry is recessed into the main building mass. An exterior fire stair is mounted above the eastern entry roof, leading up to a window on the second floor. A brick faced masonry chimney is located near the east end of the building.

D) Automotive Shop

This U-shaped building sits under a side gable roof, with smaller projecting gables at the east and west ends of the north façade forming the legs of the "U". The building is clad with horizontal board siding at the first floor level, with vertical board and batten siding in the gable ends. The board and batten siding undulates at its bottom edge. Three gabled dormers are present on the north façade, all clad with board and batten siding. Numerous entry doors are located on all façades, with a combination of single window over panel doors and six light flat doors. Vehicle doors are located on both the east and west ends of the building, as well as in the legs of the "U" under the projecting gables on the north façade. All of the vehicle doors are of the steel roll up variety. The windows are primarily nine light fixed sashes, typically arranged in large banks that are two rows high. Some of the upper windows have been painted over, and the windows in the dormers are paired nine light fixed sashes. The building interior is utilitarian, with heavy timber framing and concrete floors. The upper story, contained within the main gable, is an open storage area with tongue and groove board cribbing or plywood cribbing. The timber framing is bolted with steel splice plates at the intersections.

E) Motor Pool / Break Room

The Motor Pool and Break Room Building sits directly north of Mill Creek under a side gable roof. This long, low, rectangular building is clad with horizontal lap siding and board and batten siding in the gable ends. The north façade features five regularly spaced gabled dormers, each with a pair of six light fixed sashes. The main floor windows are a combination of nine light wood sash and sliding aluminum sash windows. The western end of the north façade has seven bays for covered vehicle parking, and the westernmost bay retains a pair of outswinging garage doors that appear to be original. Concrete ramps and stairs lead to the doors into the building on the north façade, and the westernmost door has been removed and replaced with a window. The south façade also has a combination of wood and aluminum sash windows, and the exposed foundation of the east, west, and south sides of the building is faced with uncoursed basalt.

F) Keep Oregon Green (K.O.G.) Building

The Keep Oregon Green Building is an irregularly shaped 1 ½ story building under a gable roof. Originally constructed as administrative offices for the CCC camp at this location, the building features a side gable roof that is oriented roughly north-south. Rectangular bays under gable roofs are at each end of the primary façade, and two small gabled dormers are placed between the projecting gables on this façade. The main entry to the building is centered on the east façade, with three concrete steps leading up to the door. The building is a symmetrical composition clad with horizontal beveled siding in most areas. All of the gable ends, with the exception of the southern end of the main gable, are clad with board and batten siding that has an undulating lower edge. The rear elevation features a central rectangular bay under a gable roof, flanked by two gabled dormers. The windows at the first floor level are all six-over-six double hung wood sash, and the dormers have wood nine light casement sashes. This building is the most intact example of the CCC camp at this location, and following the disbanding of the CCC in 1942 the building became the office of the Keep Oregon Green Association, a non-profit organization established in 1941 dedicated to public education in the protection of Oregon forest and timberlands.

G) Forest Practices Building

The Forest Practices Building is a rectangular building covered by a gable on hip roof. The building is clad with horizontal lap siding at the first floor level, finished with cornerboards. The small gable ends are clad with board and batten siding, and the roof is clad with wood shingles. The building has two small gabled dormers on the primary façade, both clad with board and batten siding. The dormers have open eaves with exposed rafter tails, while the gable ends of the main roof are open to expose the purlins. The windows are all sliding aluminum sashes with narrow board trim, and are irregularly placed. Two windows on the south façade have seen the addition of small metal awnings. Two doors provide access to the building on the east (primary) façade, and one door is present on each of the north and west sides of the building. A stonemasonry basalt wall is located along the south side of the building, enclosing a small walkway between the wall and the building.

H) Fire Cache Building

The Fire Cache Building is a utilitarian structure under a gable on hip roof, with smaller projecting gables at both ends of the west (primary) façade. The building is a symmetrical composition, with four bays on the primary façade. These bays all contain steel roll up doors for equipment access. Two small dormers are located above the two central bays. A central entrance, covered by a small gable roof supported by knee brackets, is located at the center of the façade. The entry door has two horizontal panes over a single panel with a three light transom window. The north elevation has two gabled dormers identical to those on the west side. The dormers all feature open eaves, paired six light wood sash windows, shingle siding below the eaves, and board and batten siding in the gable ends. The building is primarily clad with horizontal lap siding, but the area around the northern and southern bay doors on the west side is clad with vertical board and batten siding that appears to be a replacement of the original siding. The windows in the building are all fixed wood sashes, with large banks of nine light sashes on the north and south elevations, and a group of four nine light sashes on the east elevation. The roof is clad with wood shakes, and all of the eaves are open to expose the rafter tails. The east elevation features a row of four gables, with board and batten siding in the gable ends. The rear

entry to the building is located on this façade in a rectangular bay under a shallow shed roof. The building is of heavy timber construction, with simple wooden trusses allowing for an open interior volume at the ground floor. By the end of 1938, a central fire supply depot was established at the Oregon State Forestry Complex. By 1947 the cache held fire equipment and supplies for 2,500 men to provide statewide support for fire suppression.

I) Communications Building

The Communications Building is a rectangular building under a gable on hip roof. The building features a recessed porch on the southwest corner of the building that is elevated with stairs at the north end of the porch and a ramp on the south side of the building. The eave is supported by large square columns at the porch area. The roof is clad with wood shingles, and three gabled dormers are present on the west side of the roof and two are present on the east side. The dormer eaves, like the eaves on the main roof, are open to expose the rafter tails and the purlins extend out through the barge boards at all of the gable ends. The building has two steel roll up bay doors at the north end of the west façade, and a secondary entrance on the north end of the building. The building is clad with horizontal lap siding, and the windows at the ground floor level are all aluminum sliding sashes. The dormers and gable ends are clad with board and batten siding, and feature paired nine light fixed wood sash windows. An interior concrete block chimney is located above the southern dormer at the ridge. The building housed the Radio Equipment Lab. Radio was first used in state fire control with the development of the shortwave battery operated systems. At the lab, 75 shortwave sets were put in use in 1939 and during the next twenty years the State Radio Laboratory designed, built, modified, and contracted the building of more than 20 different models of radio sets to become the foremost organization in forestry communications in Oregon. By 1944 State Radio Laboratory had constructed over 170 sets, which were placed in service throughout the state.

J) Graphics Building

The Graphics Building is an irregularly shaped 1 ½ story building, with the ridge of the main gable running approximately north-south. The main gable is a jerkinhead gable with minimal eaves at the gable ends and exposed rafter tails. Two rectangular bays project out from the west side of the building. The northern bay is one story high, and has a recessed entry under its jerkinhead gable. The southern bay is two stories high, with a jerkinhead gable at the top and an extended hip over the covered porch area at the southern entry. The eaves are supported at these porches by square timber columns. A shed dormer runs nearly the entire length of the building on the west side, broken only by the two story projecting bay at the southern end of the façade. This dormer is clad with horizontal lap siding, as is the remainder of the building with the exception of the gable ends, which are clad with board and batten siding. The north, east, and south sides of the building have secondary entrances, each under a small hip roof. The northern and eastern hips are supported by square columns, and the southern entry is enclosed. The east elevation also has a two story rectangular projecting bay under a jerkinhead roof. To the south of this bay is a series of five small hipped dormers, clad with wood shingles and each with a nine light wood sash window. The roof is clad with wood shakes throughout the building. At the western shed dormer, the windows are a combination of six and nine light wood sashes, typically grouped. The ground floor windows are predominantly six over six double hung wood sash, but in certain locations the wood windows have been replaced with aluminum sliding sashes, mostly in the main gable ends and the southern projecting bay on the west façade.

K) Insect and Disease Laboratory (I & D Lab)
The Insect and Disease Laboratory is a small rectangular side gabled building, one story high. The main entry to the building is on the west elevation, offset to the south of the center of the façade. The entry is covered by a small cantilevered gable over the door. A secondary entrance is located at the west end of the north elevation. Paired six light casement windows flank the main entry. The building is clad with horizontal lap siding, except at the gable ends where board and batten siding with an undulating lower edge is used. The roof is covered with wood shakes. The Insect and Disease Management Program was established within the Oregon Department of Forestry in 1921, and this laboratory provided work space for the program.

L) Mill Creek Bridge
The Mill Creek Bridge is a 96 foot long reinforced concrete slab, beam, and girder structure with two equal spans. The bridge is skewed, and is supported by a pair of reinforced concrete piers at the center of the structure. These piers, like the Mill Creek revetments, are clad with basalt stone that is battered. The bridge has haunched girders, and the center transverse beam is also haunched at the piers. The bridge has solid concrete balustrades with plain concrete piers at the ends and at the center of the bridge. The bridge balustrades and piers are replacements of the original balustrades, which were originally constructed of peeled logs. The outer girders were also faced with logs to give the impression that the bridge was constructed of wood. The facing logs were bolted to the outer girders, and the facing log at the girder haunches was dapped to fit the taper of the girder. It is unknown when the log facing and balustrades were removed from the bridge. The bridge was designed by the Oregon State Highway Commission (now the Oregon Department of Transportation) under the direction of G. S. Paxson, State Bridge Engineer.

M) Communications Tower
The Communications Tower is located southeast of the Communications Building (Building I). This tower is of steel lattice construction, and is tapered. The steel lattice tower is bolted together with rectangular gusset plates at the main intersections of the individual members, which are steel angles of various sizes. The tower is approximately 60 feet high, with a winding steel staircase leading to the top platform, which has an expanded metal grate surface. The platform is surrounded by a two line steel guardrail. Communications antennae and dishes are attached to the tower at various locations, primarily near the top of the structure.

N) Stone Building
The small Stone Building is located at the northern end of the Mill Creek Bridge near the Motor Pool Building. This building features a front gable with wood shakes and open eaves. The building is constructed of uncoursed basalt, with a six light wood sash window on three of the elevations. The fourth elevation, under the west gable end, contains the building entry. The door opening is topped by a stone lintel, with voussoirs above. The door is a solid wood panel door, with a small concrete pad outside.

O) Douglas Fir Interpretive Log
The Douglas Fir Interpretive Log is a remnant round from a tree approximately 600 years old at the time of cutting and 10 feet in diameter at breast height. The Douglas Fir is the State Tree of Oregon, and is the most important single timber species in North America. The harvest of Douglas Fir made Oregon the nation's leading timber producer. This display log is housed under a simple gable roofed structure, with open sides and a wood shake roof. The log rests on an

elevated platform surrounded by a low basalt wall and flagstone path. The log was relocated three times between March of 2001 and May of 2003. When moved, a stone pedestal was discovered under the log that featured gothic arched openings on all eight sides of the pedestal. The octagonal pedestal was surrounded by a basalt block wall that served as the foundation for the basalt wall surrounding the display.

P) Stonemasonry Walls

Stonemasonry walls exist at various locations throughout the Oregon State Forester's Complex. The most prominent of these walls extends the entire length of the complex along State Street, the northern boundary of the complex. Completed by 1940, these walls are typical of the CCC-era stonework in Oregon, and are a crenellated design. Large piers are located at the ends of the walls, which are of uncoursed basalt. Basalt flagstone sidewalks run between the walls and State Street, and in sections the walls have been altered by the additions of pyramidal concrete caps on the crenellations. A battered stone pier stands at the eastern entrance to the complex, with the Oregon Department of Forestry emblem inset on wood panels. The stonemasonry walls along State Street were included in the National Register nomination for the Office Building (Building A in this report). Similar walls exist near each end of the Mill Creek Bridge, and the larger end piers have pyramidal caps of basalt in these areas.

II. HISTORY

The Oregon State Forester's Complex began development in 1937 when the State Board of Forestry purchased 7.26 acres on the west side of Mill Creek. Fire had destroyed the Oregon State Capitol and the Forestry Department headquarters in 1935, and the site was chosen opposite Mill Creek from the state headquarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC headquarters began construction in 1936 using standard U.S. Forest Service designs for CCC construction projects. The site was located at the eastern end of town at the time, on a low marshy area along Mill Creek. Because the site was low, debris from the burned capitol building was used as landfill to raise the site in advance of building construction. The site was prepared by the CCC, and this work fit well within the original mission of the organization as directed by President Roosevelt.

Construction began on the State Forester's Office Building and its supporting garages and warehouses in March of 1938. The Office Building was constructed by the Works Progress Administration in order to comply with the federal project funding requirements of the time, but the remaining supporting buildings were constructed by the CCC. In addition to the Forester's Office Building, there were originally two warehouses, a machine shop, and a 14-car garage constructed by the CCC at the Forester's Complex on the west side of Mill Creek. When the Forester's Office Building was completed in December of 1938, the CCC complex on the east side of the stream contained an office (now the Keep Oregon Green Building), barracks, a recreation hall, a kitchen and mess hall, three warehouses, a machine shop, and an oil house. These buildings on the east side of Mill Creek were started in April of 1936 and were completed by April of 1937.

The CCC was disbanded in 1942 with the advent of World War II. At this time, the CCC headquarters site was transferred to the Forestry Department from the Federal government and incorporated into the headquarters complex of the agency. The combined complex served all of

the participating organizations of the state fire patrol system as a centralized equipment distribution center. Fourteen fire protection organizations across the state were supplied from the central headquarters, providing protection for 10 million acres of forest land in Oregon.

Since its establishment in 1937, the function of the Oregon State Forester's Complex has changed. The Forestry Department has shifted the primary use of the complex from machine, engine repair, and warehousing to its current primary use of administrative functions. The majority of the utilitarian buildings were added in the early years of the complex, and these support buildings are systematically being replaced by newer administrative buildings. The Master Plan for the complex completed in 1994 provided the framework for the transition from the utilitarian nature of the complex to the current administrative use of the land.

III. SOURCES

Anonymous. *History of Oregon and Forestry (Draft 3/19/04).* Salem: Oregon Department of Forestry, 2004.

Anonymous. "ODF – Salem Compound Evolution" Undated Manuscript, Oregon Department of Forestry.

Fisher, James G. *Oregon State Forester's Office Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form.* Salem: Oregon State Department of Forestry, 1981.

Otis, Alison T. The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-42. Washington D.C.: USDA Forest Service, 1986.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This photographic documentation was prepared by the Oregon Department of Transportation for the Oregon Department of Forestry through an Interagency Agreement. The purpose of the agreement was to document the Oregon State Forester's Office Complex prior to redevelopment within the complex and the construction of a new office building.