

KLAMATH BASIN PROJECT, LOST RIVER

DIVERSION DAM HOUSE

Lost River near intersection of State Hwy. 140
and Hill Rd.

Klamath Falls vicinity

Klamath County

Oregon

HAER No. OR-90-B

HAER
ORE
18-KLAF
1B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Columbia Cascades Support Office
National Park Service
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

^{BASIN}
~~THE~~ KLAMATH PROJECT,
Lost River Diversion Dam House

HAER
ORE,
18-KLAFA,
1B-

HAER No. OR-90-B

Location: Lost River Diversion Dam House
Located on the Lost River near the intersection of State Highway 140 and Hill Road, vicinity of Klamath Falls, Oregon

U.S.G.S. 15 minute Merrill, Oregon quadrangle 1957
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10.609920.4666200

Architect: Unknown

Builder: United States Government, Reclamation Service (Bureau of Reclamation)

Present Owner: Bureau of Reclamation
200 Washburn Way
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Present Use: Abandoned, scheduled for destruction in 1998.

Significance: The Lost River Diversion Dam serves as another important feature of the irrigation and economic development of Klamath Basin. This dam was necessary to help drain and reclaim Tule Lake and make it available for agricultural development. The Lost River Diversion Dam House served as the residence for the Federal workers who maintained and controlled releases from the dam.

Prepared by: Patrick Welch
Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Date: November 14, 1997

1. DESCRIPTION

Klamath Falls, Oregon is an agricultural and timber community located in south-central Oregon at the center of the Klamath Basin (Figure 1). The surrounding area is characterized by Basin and Range topography with large lakes or drainage sumps representing remnants of Pleistocene lakes. Former volcanic activity evident in cones and rugged mountain systems. The floor of the basin stands at just over 4,000 feet. The high, dry climate averages approximately 13 inches of rainfall and is characterized by cold winters and mild summers. The winter weather is cold with an average low temperature of nearly 20 degrees fahrenheit. Summers are mild.

The vegetation of the basin is related to soils and available water. Higher elevations are forested, dominated by Ponderosa pine to the north. Lava flows are barren while the plains contain various mixtures of bunch grass, sage brush, and juniper. Meadows and marshes are present along portions of waterways and in sump areas. Modern agriculture dominates the landscape and individual ranches are scattered throughout the basin.

This site consists of a house, workshop, a shade ramada (Photo 1), and associated landscaping adjacent to the Lost River Diversion Dam (Photo2). A barn built adjacent to the workshop has been moved. The site is located approximately 9.5 miles from Klamath Falls, Oregon on the south bank of the Lost River. Wilson Reservoir is formed by the diversion dam (Figure2).

The house, built in either 1911 or 1924, is a single story rectangular structure placed on a partial basement (Figure 3). It is unknown if the basement dates to the original construction. A rear porch provides access to the kitchen and basement (Photo3). This room does not appear on a 1912 landscape plan drawing.

The exterior consists of narrow width clapboards that overlap. The low hip roof is covered with composition shingles (Photo 4). The roof trim has the eaves projecting from the walls with the rafters exposed. A chimney extends through the house near the apex of the roof, although there is no fireplace built into the house. A wood burning stove in the living room vents into the wall and probably vents into the chimney.

There is a small weather shelter over the front door (Photo 5). The gabled roof abuts against the roof eaves. It has simple trim with the rafters also being exposed. Two structural supports extend from the base of the shelter to either side of the front door. The front door, itself, is off-set to the left and consists of wood panels and a single glass pane. The door opening is flat with plain molding and trim. Two cement steps rise up to floor level.

The windows on the house are flat rectangular structural openings with plain moldings and plain

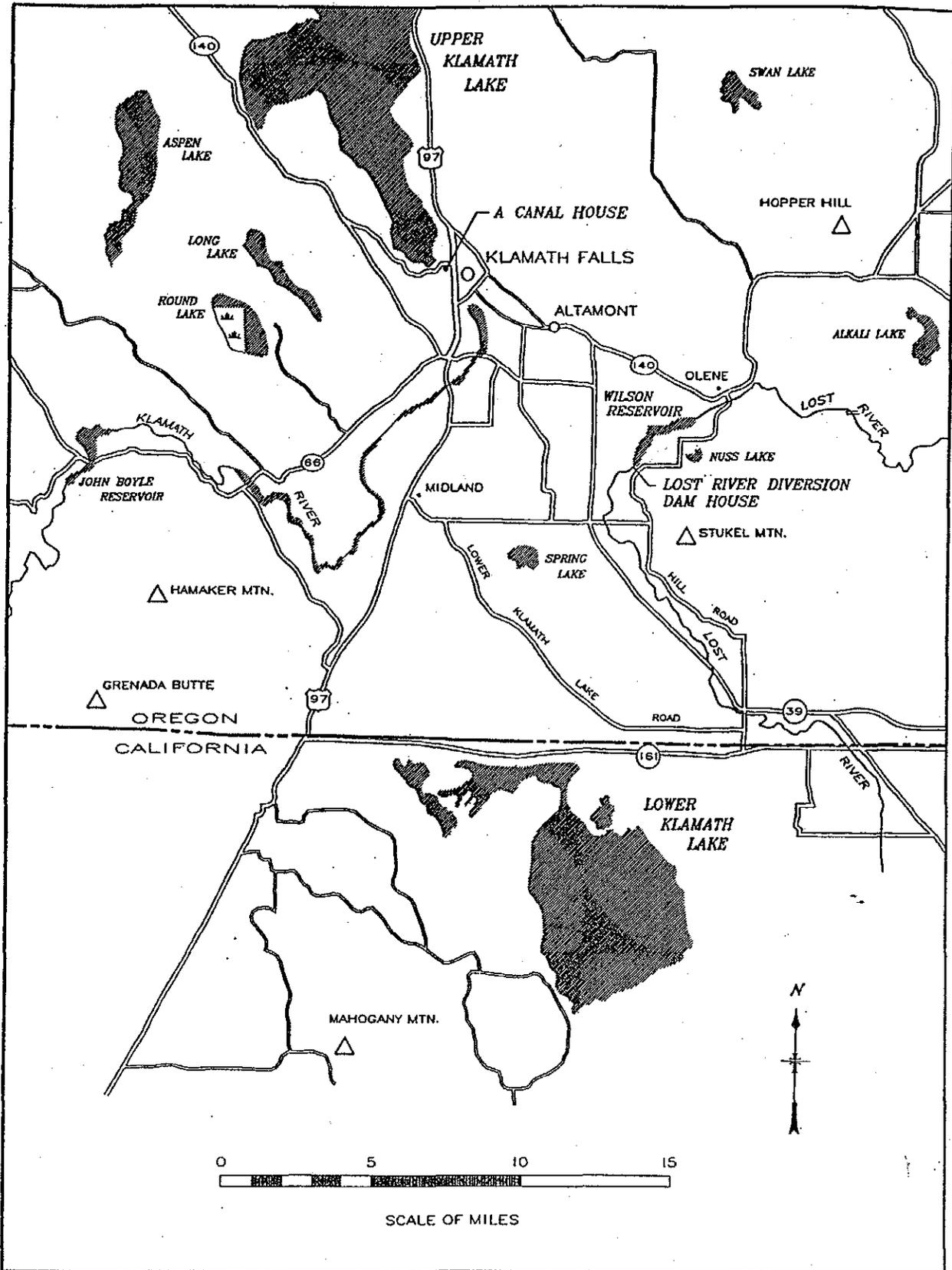


Figure 1 Regional location of the A Canal and Lost River Diversion Dam houses.

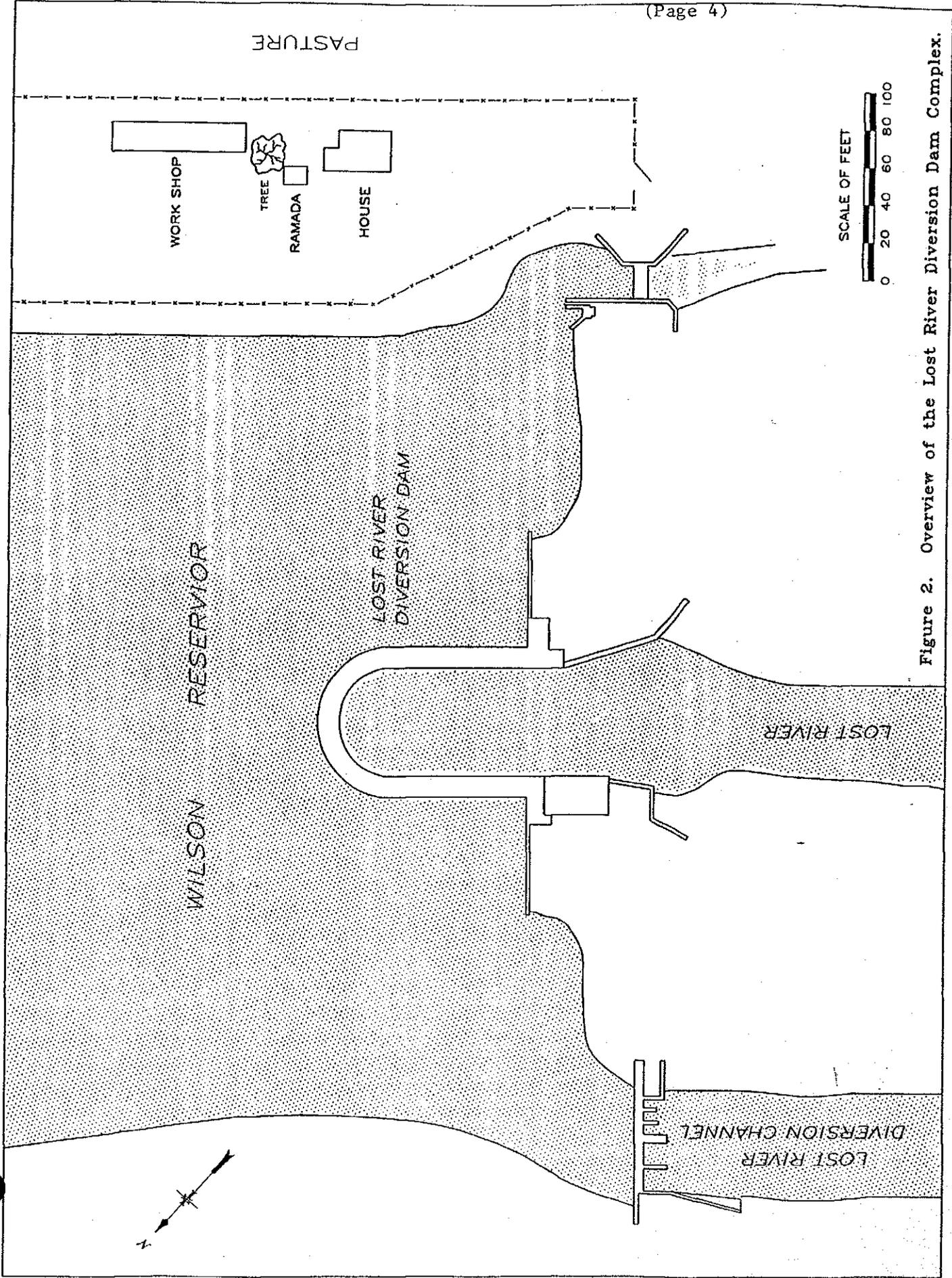


Figure 2. Overview of the Lost River Diversion Dam Complex.

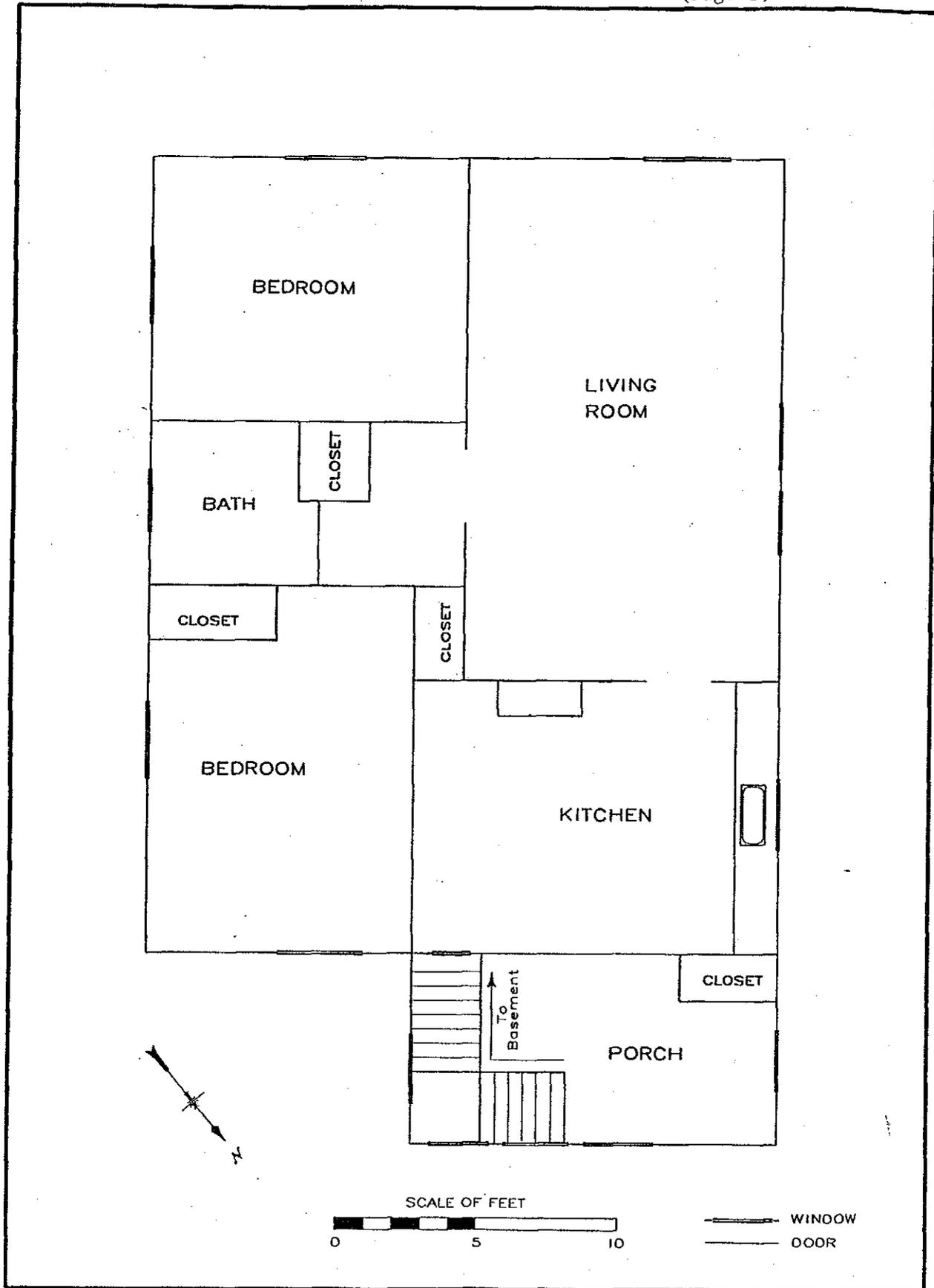


Figure 3. Floor Plan of the Lost River Diversion Dam Control House.

sills. The windows contain two sashes with one pane per sash. The lower panes slide up and down. Three side-by-side windows at the rear of the porch are fixed with one sash per window with four panes per sash. The side windows are similar to the house windows, but are a smaller size. Finally, a window between the kitchen and the porch is a single pane fixed window (Photo 6).

Interior doorways are plain with plain trim protruding from the wall by approximately one-half inch. Living room doorways leading into the kitchen and hallway are arched. Wood floors are present in the two bedrooms with linoleum being present on all other floors. The walls exhibit a smooth finish. Finally, the baseboard is six inches high.

Preliminary environmental monitoring has been conducted at the house. Asbestos has been detected on the exterior. Lead-based paint has not been detected, but there has not been a full survey of the building. Additional evaluations are needed for both substances.

The shade ramada lies just outside the rear door. It is made from 4 by 4 inch support beams and it is open on all sides except for a low partition located on two sides. The floor of the ramada is cement. The roof is slightly tilted.

The workshop measures 16 feet deep by approximately 76 feet long (Photo 7). A 1912 site plan drawing depicts the shop as being 16 by 60 feet. The workshop is divided into several bays or internal rooms. The windows are particularly interesting. One rear window contains two sashes with nine lights per sash. Two other windows in the same area possess two sashes with eight and 16 lights. The roof is shake, but many of these are missing. The building is listing outward.

The 1912 map depicts a large barn measuring 36 by 48 feet. A 1913 photograph shows the house, barn and workshop. The whereabouts of this barn is unknown.

This house and the A Canal Headworks House were determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. A memorandum of agreement was prepared and entered into by Reclamation, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to mitigate adverse impacts from the demolition of these houses. This HAER documentation completes the stipulations of the MOA.

II. HISTORIC INFORMATION

Occupation of the Klamath Basin was encouraged by a series of Federal incentives to provide land to settlers. The Preemptive Act, 1862 Homestead Act, and the Swamp Land Act all sparked interest in the basin and elsewhere in the West. Settlement, however, remained sparse until after conclusion of the Modoc War in 1873. An excellent discussion of Klamath Basin history is

provided in Fagan (1994).

Ranching, logging and farming became the main economic pursuits in the Klamath Basin, although settlements were wide spread and business developments were slow. Linkville (later changed to Klamath Falls), was the first community in the Klamath Basin and held a population of only 384 in 1885.

Early farmers recognized that the region's agricultural potential was limited by low precipitation. Several early irrigation canals were completed to provide reliable water to limited areas. The 1878 Ankeny Canal served residents of Linkville. This canal, purchased several years later, was expanded 15 miles into the Klamath Valley. At peak operation this canal irrigated approximately 4,000 acres (Voorhees 1913). Several additional canals were in operation either draining lower Klamath Lake or working a saw and flour mill at Link River (Fagan 1994) near Klamath Falls. Ultimately, rights to all existing canals were acquired by the Federal government.

The 1902 Newlands Reclamation Act prompted the United States Reclamation Service (Bureau of Reclamation) to investigate potential agricultural area across the West. Government surveyors examined the Klamath Basin in 1903 and the system envisioned at that time continues to this day. The Klamath Project includes a 50-square-mile area featuring canals and drains to irrigate Klamath and Lost River Valleys and reclamation of Lower Klamath and Tule Lakes. Additional portions of the Klamath Project were added later.

The U.S. Secretary of Interior approved the Klamath Project on May 15, 1905 and \$4.4 million was appropriated for construction (Voorhees 1913). Interest in the government's participation in this irrigation program ran high. Local ranchers and farmers formed the Klamath Water Users' Association to serve as the entity to repay government expenses. Shares in the association were assessed to subscribers based on acreage. Two million dollars was raised (Voorhees 1913).

The first construction phase of the Klamath Project involved building the Main or A Canal. The route of this canal followed, in part, the existing Akeny-Henly Canal, as it was called in 1906. Completion of the A Canal was delayed as the government was required to meet water deliveries from the existing Akeny-Henly Canal (Stene n.d.). Project Engineer D. W. Murphy directed the contract of Mason, Davis & Company to excavate the first nine miles of the A Canal (Voorhees 1913). The canal was initially placed into operation on June 27, 1907.

Implementation of additional portions of the Klamath Project continued after completion of the A Canal. Branches of the A Canal began, although labor and other problems delayed completion of the B Canal until 1912.

Development of Clear Lake Dam was initiated in 1908 to provide reliable water to users along

Lost River and to assist in reclaiming Tule Lake. The dam work force included Austrians, Serbians, and later, Bulgarians. Troubles were encountered at the dam site from porous volcanic rock, cold winter weather, and labor. Workers deserted the project because they received higher wages during harvest. The Clear Lake Dam and two wing dikes were finally completed in 1910. A residential structure was built at Clear Lake Dam, but it no longer exists.

Early development of the Klamath Project proved to be more expensive than originally anticipated. Klamath Water Users Association share holders balked at the possibility of higher fees. A compromise of sorts was reached by the Reclamation Service eliminating certain projected areas from water service. This decision increased the importance of developing the Tule Lake area.

Construction of the Lost River Diversion Dam and Channel became important to divert water from Lost River to the Klamath River. This would keep water from emptying into Tule Lake and the diversion channel could also receive water from Klamath River during times of drought.

The Lost River Diversion Dam began construction in 1911 at Wilson's Bridge and the lake created by the dam came to be known as Wilson Reservoir. The harsh winter provided problems for contractor George Clark. At first he heated water and sand to mix with cement. Later as temperatures dropped, workers built fires beneath tarps for ten days at a time to hasten curing (Voorhees 1913). The dam, completed in 1912, is designed in an unusual horseshoe shape, 110 feet long and 30 feet high (Photo 8). A dam tender's house was built adjacent to the dam in 1911. A 1913 photo shows the house, a large, two story barn and workshed (Photo 9). Records from 1911 show that the house and a screened porch cost \$1,016.74 to build.

Additional activity continued with construction of various canals and flumes. The majority of the Klamath Project was designed and built between 1903 and 1918. During this period over 200 miles of canals and 53 miles of drains were put into service. In 1908 the Secretary of Interior announced the opening of 31,153 acres for settlement. Later, from 1922 to 1948, Reclamation opened an additional 44,000 acres in Tule Lake. Today, over 100,000 acres are under cultivation in the Klamath Basin and most of them receive water from the Klamath Project.

The Lost River Diversion Dam House was under the direct control of the Federal government until the 1954. The Bureau of Reclamation entered into an agreement with the Klamath Irrigation District to operate and maintain portions of the Klamath Project. Management of the house transferred to the water district, although Reclamation maintained control and operation of the Lost River Diversion Dam. The residence became a rental and was occupied as recently as 1995. Reclamation regained management of the house in 1996.

III. REFERENCES

Fagan, John Cultural Resources Inventory and Site Testing Plans for the Proposed Pacific Gas Transmission Company's Medford Extension. Archeological Investigations Northwest, Inc. Report No. 47. Unpublished manuscript, 1994.

Steene, Eric The Klamath Project History (Draft). Unpublished manuscript being finalized by Bureau of Reclamation, Denver Office, no date.

Voorhees, I.S. History of the Klamath Project, Oregon-California, from May 1, 1903 to December 31, 1912. Unpublished manuscript on file at the Bureau of Reclamation, Klamath Basin Area Office, 1913.