

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK EVALUATION: SPEARFISH FISHERIES CENTER (SPEARFISH HATCHERY)

PREPARED FOR SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Prepared by



May 2015

National Historic Landmark Evaluation: Spearfish Fisheries Center (Spearfish Hatchery)

Prepared for:
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1.0 Introduction

In September 2014, Stark Preservation Planning LLC (Stark) conducted an evaluation for National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation eligibility for the Spearfish Fisheries Center (Spearfish Hatchery; now D. C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives) in Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota. The study was completed on behalf of the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which seeks to expand the state's NHL collection to better reflect South Dakota's role in national historical themes and to preserve places of great significance. The property was selected by the SHPO for its potential to represent national history. Three other South Dakota sites were also evaluated as part of this project and submitted under separate cover: Fort Sisseton in Marshall County, the Mobridge Auditorium in Mobridge, Walworth County, and the Prairie Homestead in Jackson County.

The investigation entailed initial contact with the property owner representatives to inform them of the study, to provide information on the NHL program, and to ascertain their willingness to participate in the study. Preliminary research was conducted at the South Dakota State Historical Society and field investigation took place in September 2014. Other resources available from the Spearfish Fisheries Center archives informed the history of the property. Additional research into comparative properties and historical contexts were completed, as needed. The National Park Service's bulletin *How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations* was used to provide guidance on how properties may become eligible for NHL designation. The NHL program uses six criteria to assess the national significance of a property.

1. Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.
2. Properties that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.
3. Properties that represent some great idea or ideal of the American people.
4. Properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
5. Properties that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture.
6. Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

In addition to establishing national significance, a NHL-eligible property must also retain a “high degree of integrity” as expressed by the seven aspects of historical integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The findings and recommendation of the Spearfish Fisheries Center evaluation of NHL eligibility are presented in this report. In addition, property information was entered into the SHPO historic sites survey database.

2.0 Property Data

Location:	423 Hatchery Circle Spearfish, Lawrence County, SD 57783
Owner:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Contact Information:	April Gregory, Executive Director D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery & Archives 605-642-7730 x221 april@dcboothfishhatchery.org Carlos Martinez, Project Leader U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 605-642-7730 x223 carlos_martinez@fws.gov
Ownership Category:	Public
NRHP Status:	Listed (1976; revised 1991)
Property Type:	District

3.0 Summary Description

The Spearfish Fisheries Center (Spearfish Hatchery, or “the Hatchery”) is located at the southern end of Canyon Street in the City of Spearfish, Lawrence County, South Dakota. The complex covers over 10 acres with a collection of buildings and structures that served the U.S. Fish Commission (predecessor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS]) for regional fish conservation management (Figure 1). Construction on the site began in 1898, with significant additions and alterations continuing into the late 1930s. Following World War II, the focus of the Hatchery changed, and was no longer used to hatch fish. In 1983, the USFWS closed the site, and then re-activated it as a national interpretive center, archives and museum under shared management with the City of Spearfish.

Contributing properties to the historic district are as follows.

Hatchery Building, 1898-1899. The Hatchery Building is a wood frame building clad with drop siding and wood shingles. It is situated on high ground on the west side of the complex. A long, side-gabled, one-story wing, the hatching room, contained 48 hatching troughs. The two-story tower on the northeast corner, with flared eaves and an open porch with turned columns, housed the original superintendent’s office and apartment. The building now serves as a museum and visitor center (Figures 2 and 3).

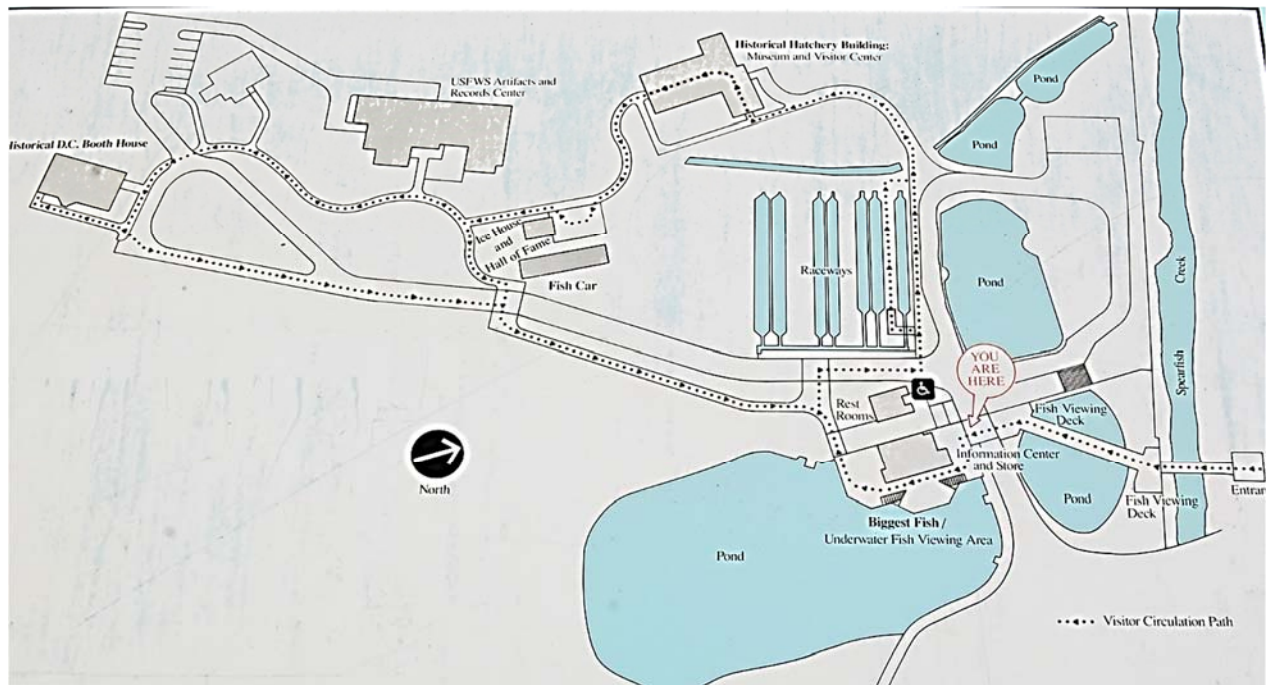


Figure 1. Overview of Spearfish Hatchery, as shown on orientation map at entrance kiosk



Figure 2. Hatchery Building, Facing SW



Figure 3. Hatchery Building, Facing NW

Superintendent's Residence/D. C. Booth House, 1905. The Neo-Colonial wood-framed house stands on a sandstone foundation near the south end of the site. Rectangular in plan and two stories in height, the front-gabled house is clad with clapboard siding. A one-story porch supported by Tuscan columns spans the north façade. Cornice returns and modillions are found at the eaves. Fenestration is composed of one-over-one double-hung sash, and an oval window is centered on the façade. The dwelling was built to house the site superintendent, and is now interpreted as part of the historic site (Figure 4).

Residence 1, c. 1935. The one-and-a-half-story bungalow is constructed of wood frame and features six-over-one windows. It was used to house hatchery workers (Figure 5).

Garage, c. 1925. South of the Superintendent's Residence is a one-bay garage with clapboard siding and a modern fiberglass overhead door (Figure 5).

Garages (Two), c. 1939. These two, two-bay garages are set side by side, at an angle, east of the storm channel running through the property. Each has rough-cut sandstone walls, a gabled roof with clapboard in the gable ends, and sliding wooden doors (Figure 6).

Rearing Ponds (Five), c. 1939. The five ponds are placed at the lower end of the site, topographically, to the north and northeast sides. The current five-pond configuration was created in the 1930s as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, reconfiguring the original single-pond. The walls and floors are constructed of rubble stone masonry (Figures 6 through 8).



Figure 4. Superintendent's Residence, Facing SW



Figure 5. Residence 1, Facing NW; Garage, Facing SW



Figure 6. Two Garages, Facing E; Rearing Pond 1, Facing S



Figure 7. Rearing Pond 2, Facing W; Rearing Pond 3, Facing E



Figure 8. Rearing Ponds 4 and 5, Facing NW

Raceways (Four). The original earthen raceways were replaced circa 1939 by the shallow concrete troughs by WPA crews. The narrow raceways are constructed of concrete walls and floors and were used for sorting and inventorying the fish, and for disease control. The raceways were fully reconstructed since the 1991 revised National Register nomination (D. C. Booth Society Inc. 2013:119). Although they have lost their integrity of materials, the reconstructed raceways may meet Criteria Consideration E for reconstructed properties (Figures 9 and 10).

Masonry Bridge, c. 1898. This masonry arch bridge carries the main entry drive over the storm channel that flows through the property (Figure 10).

Minor features from the historic period extant on the site include:

- Storm channel lined with stone walls (Figure 11);
- Concrete holding reservoirs at the top of the west hill (Figure 11);
- “Mort Pit” site for burial of diseased fish; and
- Cypress water pipes (no longer used) visible above ground in several places.



Figure 9. Raceways Facing W and Facing NW



Figure 10. Raceways, Facing E; Masonry Bridge, Facing S



Figure 11. Storm Channel, Facing N; Holding Reservoir, Facing NE

Non-Contributing properties to the historic district, defined as those constructed post-1951, include:

- Artifacts and Records Center, 1995 (Figure 12);
- Gift Shop, 1995 (Figure 12);
- Entry Pavilion, 1990 (Figure 13);
- Steel truss pedestrian bridge over Pond 2 from Entry Pavilion (Figure 13);
- Ice House (reconstruction), 1989 (Figure 14);
- Fish Railroad Car (replica), moved to site in 1994 (Figure 14);
- Concrete Block Fuel Shed, 1962 (Figure 14);
- Maintenance Garage, 1960 (Figure 15);
- Yellowstone 38 Boat (moved to site) and shelter and walkway decking, 1997-1998 (Figure 15);

- Solar panels, c. 2010 (Figure 16);
- Other minor features, such as:
 - Metal picket railings throughout site (Figure 16);
 - Benches (Figure 17);
 - Statuary and ornamental pond (Figure 17);
 - Asphalt and concrete sidewalks throughout site (Figure 18);
 - Interpretive signage; and
 - Flag pole grouping (Figure 18).

Several structures dating from the historical period have been removed, including:

- Worker house (built between 1942 and 1965; on site of current archives building);
- Residence on east side of raceways (added by 1942);
- Upper reservoir (not in use by 1942);
- Upper raceways (removed before 1942) (Figure 19);
- Fish food house and ice house (north of rearing pond 3); and
- Barn (north of rearing ponds 4 and 5; replaced by concrete block garage) (Figure 19).



Figure 12. Artifacts and Record Center, Facing SW; Gift Shop, Facing SE



Figure 13. Entry Pavilion, Facing S; Pedestrian Bridge, Facing SW



Figure 14. Fish Car and Reconstructed Ice House, Facing SE; Fuel Storage, Facing NE



Figure 15. Maintenance Garage, Facing E; Yellowstone 38 Boat and Shelter, Facing SE



Figure 16. Solar Panels, Facing N; Railings, Facing W



Figure 17. Benches and Stone Wall, Facing NW; Ornament Pond and Statuary, Facing SW



Figure 18. Examples of Modern Sidewalks and Railings

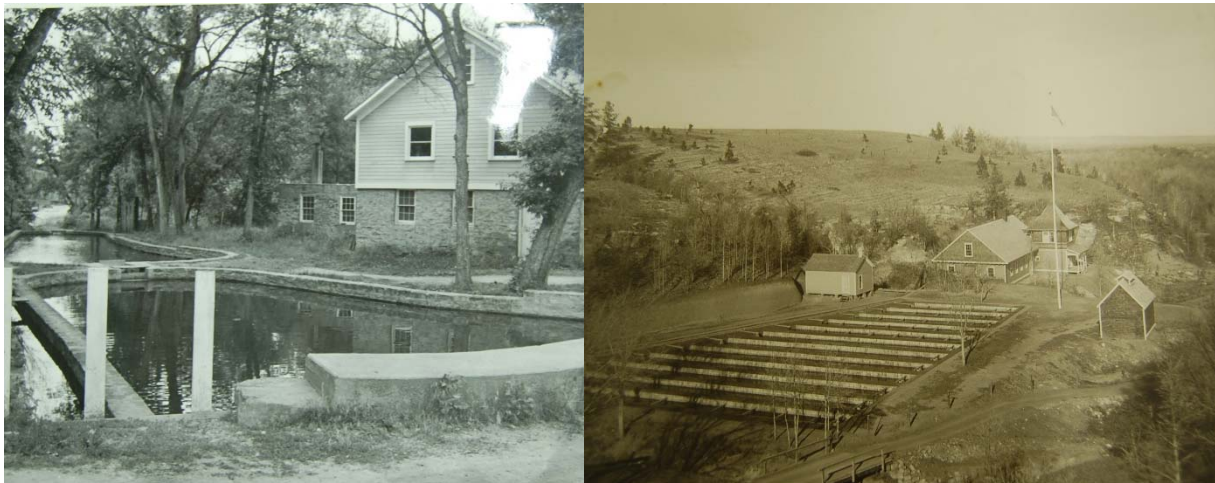


Figure 19. Barn near Rearing Pond (not extant); View of Upper Raceways (not extant) and Hatchery Building (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)

4.0 Significance

4.1 HISTORICAL OUTLINE

In 1892, the United States Congress, acting through the U.S. Fish Commission, commissioned Barton Warren Evermann to identify and recommend locations to establish fish hatcheries in South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska. Over the next year, Evermann sought sites suitable for the placement of hatcheries, documenting the natural, physical and biological conditions that met the exacting needs for hatching several species of trout for release into nearby streams. Upon visiting the small milling town of Spearfish, in South Dakota's Black Hills, Evermann spotted a stream fed by hills and springs with swift currents and a gravel bottom that would be most satisfactory for a regional fish hatchery. The Commission purchased the site, which formerly housed a saw mill, on June 10, 1898 and immediately set about constructing a hatchery building. The hatchery building, designed by Hector von Bayer, housed the hatching troughs and living quarters for the superintendent. To that was added an ice house and 17 fishponds (Figures 21 and 22). By July 1899, the facility was operational and staffed by Superintendent DeWitt Clinton Booth, who received its first shipment of 100,000 trout eggs ready to be hatched and to populate Black Hills streams (D. C. Booth Society 2013:8-11).

Originally established as a unit of the Leadville, Colorado national fish hatchery, the Spearfish Hatchery became a headquarters itself and began to expand its field of operations. From 1901 to 1911, the Spearfish facility started an egg-gathering substation in Yellowstone National Park, responsible for collecting black-spotted trout eggs, shipping them to Spearfish, and distributing to other areas (Gregory 2014).

During its first decade, the Spearfish Hatchery would stock the streams of South Dakota and neighboring states with almost 20 million rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout, cutthroat trout, lake trout, Arctic grayling, and Atlantic salmon. In 1905, the Commission built a new house for Superintendent Booth, offering a commodious residence outside of the hatchery building. The eight-room dwelling offered central heat, indoor plumbing, and electricity. Booth and his family lived in the house until his retirement in 1933 (Figure 22).



Figure 20. Spearfish Hatchery and Upper Rearing Ponds, c. 1899 (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)



Figure 21. Fish Hatchery and Earthen Raceways, 1899 (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)

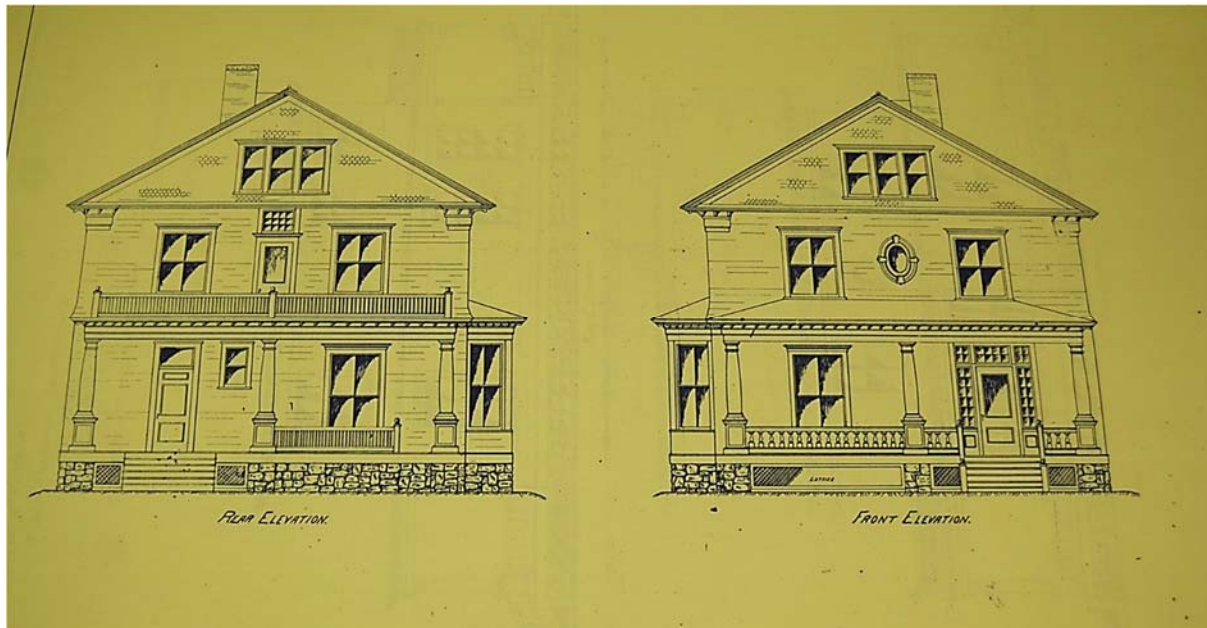


Figure 22. Architectural Plans for Superintendent's House dated 1905 (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)

The Spearfish Hatchery continued in its role as a regional center of fish culture through the first half of the twentieth century, and underwent a series of improvements to the premises. During the 1930s, work crews from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) made significant alterations to the Hatchery complex, including the replacement of earthen raceways with concrete, re-shaping the rearing pond into five separate ponds by building a native-stone wall, and lining the storm channel with stone walls (Figures 23 and 24). Two additional, stone-wall garages, and two workers bungalows were also added during this period (see Figures 5 and 6). Despite these investments, an unreliable water supply by the 1940s threatened the viability of the Hatchery. The USFWS acquired lands 12 miles west of Spearfish for the McNenny National Fish Hatchery, which was completed in 1951. Although no longer used to hatch fish from eggs, the Spearfish Hatchery continued to be used as a rearing site and administrative center. The property was listed in the National Register in 1978 (revised 1991). In 1983, the USFWS closed the Hatchery, but retained the property as a national archives of fish culture and an interpretive center under shared management with the City of Spearfish (Rau 1991:8-2).

Today, the Spearfish National Fish Hatchery is known as the D. C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives and houses a portion of the archives for the USFWS and serves as a tourist and interpretive site on fish culture. The original hatchery building is restored and serves as a visitor center, and the superintendent's house is decorated in historic furnishings and is open for tours. Several significant elements were introduced to the site to aid in interpretation, including a replica of a railroad car specially outfitted to transport fry (recently hatched fish) to distant places, such as Yellowstone Park; a Yellowstone 38 Boat perched within a shelter; a reconstruction of the original ice house; a gift shop; a visitor kiosk; and sidewalks and protective railings. The large archives building, constructed in 1995, houses the administrative offices, and collection management facility.

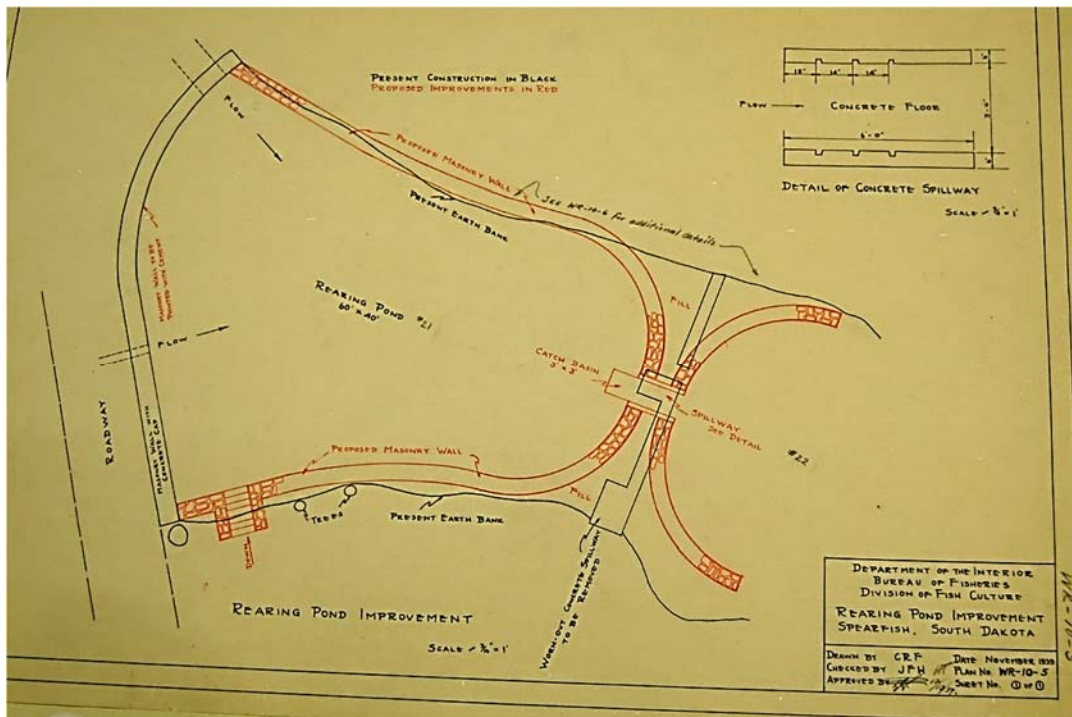


Figure 23. Plans for Rearing Pond Reconfiguration by WPA dated 1939 (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)



Figure 24. Spearfish Fish Hatchery, 1965 (Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)

4.2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original National Register nomination (Gerloff 1978) provided only a brief explanation of the site's history and historical significance and listed the property with statewide significance in the areas of Conservation and Economics during the period 1898 to 1939. In 1991, a National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase nomination provided additional documentation and clarification of its categorization and significance (Rau 1991). The amendment more accurately described the property as a *district* containing 17 contributing resources and 7 non-contributing resources (at the time). The historic district is significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Conservation ("Economics" no longer applied). The period of significance was revised to extend from 1898, marking the founding date and initial construction, to 1941, which was the 50-year cut-off date at the time of the Amendment. It appears likely that the period of significance could be revised at this time to extend beyond the arbitrary 50-year cut-off date to 1951, when the McNenny Hatchery went into operation and Spearfish no longer served its intended fish hatchery function.

The National level of significance was supported by the following statements:

- The district contains the only known surviving circa-1898 standardized hatchery building;
- The district is believed to be the best preserved historic hatchery complex in the nation;
- The Hatchery played a vital role in the development of sport fishing in Yellowstone National Park; and
- The Hatchery operated as a national fish culture training center from the days of Superintendent Booth (1898) until closing in 1983.

It is our opinion that the assertions of national significance are not supported in the National Register Amendment documentation, and that some of the stated reasons for national significance, if supported, may not meet the National Register or NHL significance criteria. Further investigation may find better support for national significance, although we believe that regardless of its significance, the Spearfish Hatchery lacks the integrity necessary for NHL designation (see below).

5.0 Integrity

NHL designation requires that a property possesses a "high degree" of integrity to convey its historical significance. For the purposes of this integrity discussion, we are presuming the Hatchery has demonstrated national significance in the area of Conservation with a period of significance spanning from 1898 to 1951. The Spearfish Hatchery historic district should strongly convey the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association from its period as a working fish hatchery. In particular, the hatchery building, series of raceways, rearing ponds, superintendent's house, WPA improvements, and worker houses, and interconnecting landscape should all be in place with minimal intrusions post-dating the historic period. Figure 25 illustrates the current condition of the historic district, indicating the locations of extant historic properties, the loss of key buildings and structures, and the addition of other properties post-dating the period of significance.

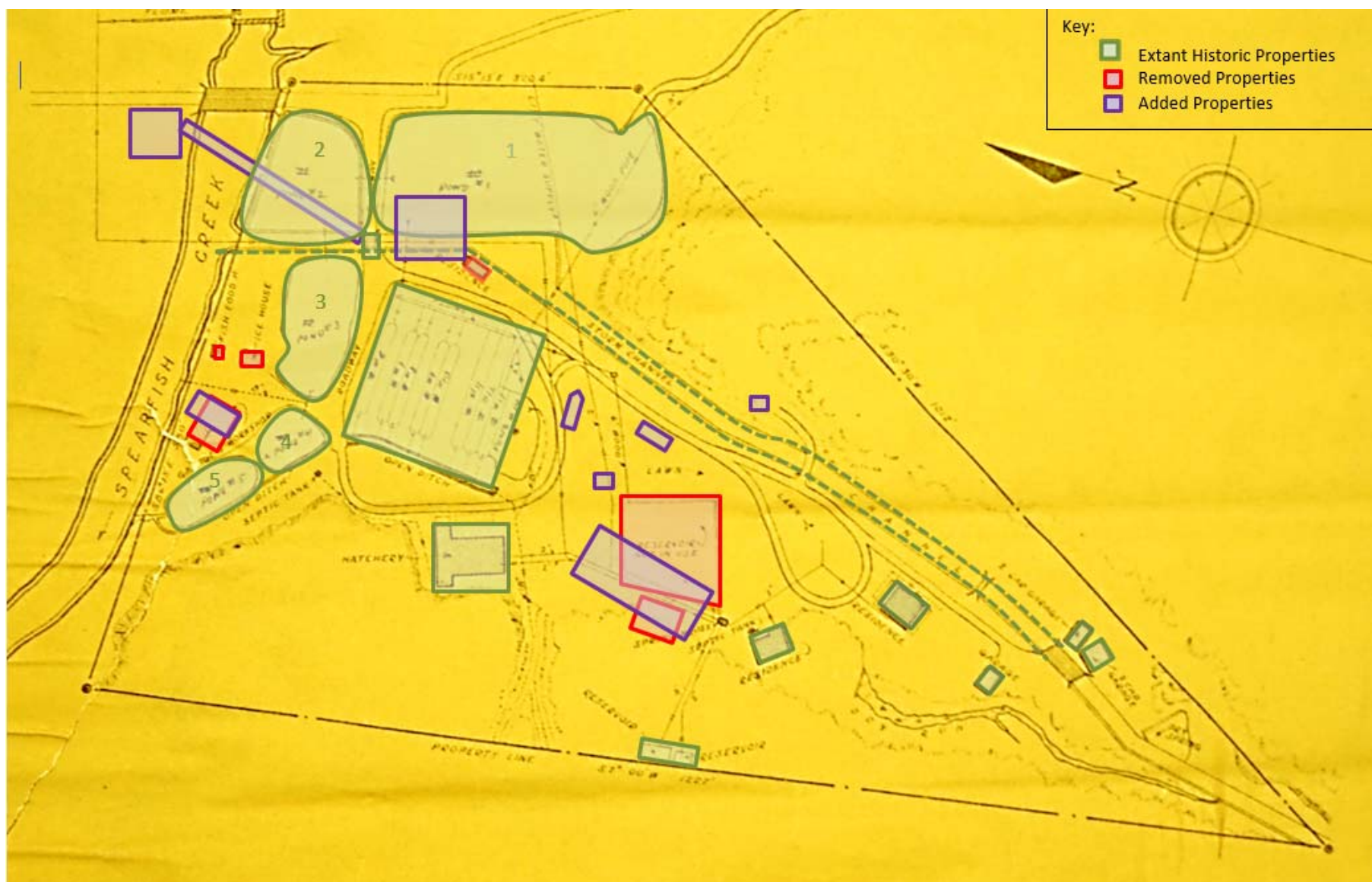


Figure 25. Spearfish Hatchery Site Current Conditions (Base Map dated 1942; Spearfish Fish Hatchery Archives)

The principal buildings and structures associated with the Spearfish Hatchery during its historic period remain intact, and most with good individual integrity (see Figure 25). These contributing properties include:

- Hatchery Building (1898);
- Superintendent's Residence (1905);
- Worker's Residence (c. 1939);
- Rearing Ponds (reconfigured c. 1939);
- Several garages (1920s-1930s);
- Raceways (c. 1939; reconstructed post-1991);
- Masonry Bridge (1898); and
- Series of masonry walls (c. 1939).

As previously noted, significant alterations have been undertaken at the Spearfish Hatchery (see Figure 25). Some of the changes resulted in the removal of historic features, including:

- Worker's house (built between 1942 and 1965; on site of current archives building);
- Residence on east side of raceways (added by 1942);
- Upper reservoir (not in use by 1942);
- Upper raceways (removed before 1942);
- Fish food house and ice house (north of rearing pond 3); and
- Barn (north of rearing ponds 4 and 5; replaced by concrete block garage).

A number of other features were added to the site to accommodate its current use as an administrative center, archives, and tourist attraction (see Figure 25). These features include:

- Artifacts and Record Center;
- Gift shop and tourist information center;
- Steel truss pedestrian bridge across pond 2;
- Entry pavilion on the north side of Spearfish Creek;
- Concrete block machine shop;
- Fuel storage building;
- Replica railroad Fish Car; and
- Yellowstone boat and shelter.

Other minor features (not shown on Figure 25), have also been added to the site, including concrete, asphalt and wood sidewalks and decks; a decorative memorial pond; statuary; solar panels; and metal guard railings.

Reconstructed properties, such as the ice house and the concrete-lined raceways, may be eligible for the National Register when they are "accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration mater plan and when no other building or structure with the same associations has survived" (National Park Service 1997:37). As replicas of the originals, the ice house and raceways *may* meet these standards.

Although the Spearfish Hatchery historic district retains some of the most important elements associated with its historic significance, the loss of the early reservoirs and raceways has resulted in important diminishment of the district's integrity of design and materials. Furthermore, the insertion of newer buildings and structures has altered the viewer's understanding of the historical function of the Hatchery site and changed the relationships of these important elements that define the property's significance. Of greatest impact are the large administrative building on the site of an early reservoir, the gifts shop placed over and near the rearing pond, and the steel truss pedestrian bridge. While these new features offer important educational and interpretive opportunities, they have the effect of compromising the district's integrity of design and setting. Two other significant features, the fish rail car and the Yellowstone boat and shelter, offer interpretation of the broader activities of the Hatchery and are related to work done at the site, but are not part of the original setting. Indeed, neither a railroad nor navigable water was associated with the historic site. Other features, such as the extensive ornamental metal railings, further detract from the site's original design aesthetic. While one or a few of these interventions may be acceptable as a modern accommodation, the combination of many intrusions, although well intentioned, result in significant, cumulative loss of integrity of materials, design, setting, association and feeling.

6.0 Recommendations

For a property to be eligible for NHL designation, it must meet both criteria for significance at the national level and it must possess a high degree of historic integrity to convey that significance. As noted, the existing National Register nomination does not clearly demonstrate or support the national significance of the Spearfish Hatchery historic district. Further investigation into the context of the federal effort to conserve and propagate fish species and comparisons with other national fish hatcheries *may* serve to demonstrate that the Spearfish Hatchery holds national significance, most likely under NHL Criterion 1 for properties identified with the broad national patterns of United States history. Based on the current assessment of the property, Stark recommends that the Hatchery lacks the high degree historic integrity necessary to convey its significance under NHL standards. While several of the principal elements associated with the historic period remain well-preserved on the site, numerous buildings and structures have been introduced to the site that diminish the historic district's integrity of design, setting, materials, feeling and association. Cumulatively, these modern intrusions pose significant limitations on its ability to meet the NHL standards for integrity. Individually, the well-preserved elements, such as hatchery building, are unlikely to meet NHL standards for significance. Stark concludes, therefore, that the Spearfish Fisheries Center is not eligible for NHL designation. No further work is recommended.

7.0 References

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