National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2014

Rocky Knob Picnic Area

Blue Ridge Parkway

Table of Contents

Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Concurrence Status

Geographic Information and Location Map

Management Information

National Register Information

Chronology & Physical History

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Condition

Treatment

Bibliography & Supplemental Information

Cultural Landscape Summary & Site Plan

Cultural Landscapes in the Cultural Resources Inventory System:

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources and cultural landscapes. The set of CRIS records for cultural landscapes is referred to as CRIS-CL.CRIS-CL records conform to a standardized data structure known as the Cultural
Landscapes Inventory (CLI).
The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CRIS are: Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Management Policies (2006), Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources) and Director's Order 28a (Archeology).

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI)

The CLI is the data structure within CRIS used to document and evaluate all potentially significant cultural landscapes in which NPS has, or plans to acquire any enforceable legal interest.
Each CRIS-CL record is certified complete when the landscape is determined to meet one of the following:
Landscape individually meets the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation; or,
Landscape is a contributing element of a property that is eligible for the National Register; or,
Landscapes does not meet the National Register criteria, but is managed as cultural resources because of law, policy or decisions reached through the park planning process.
Cultural landscapes vary from historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes to historic ethnographic landscapes, but may also fit within more than one type. Those eligible for the National Register have significance in the nation's history on a national, state or local level, as well as integrity or authenticity.
The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)). Each Federal agency shall establish…a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places…of historic properties…

Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(a)…Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA…No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior…

Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(c) Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying… historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary…

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions (Sec. 110 (a)(2)(A) Management Policies 2006. 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories…about cultural resources in units of the national park system…Cultural Landscape Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes,… and historic sites…

Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28. As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.

Inventory Unit Description:

The Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape, one of four component landscapes within the Rocky Knob Recreation Area, is located on the north side of the Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 169 in the state of Virginia. Construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway through the Rocky Knob area began in 1937, during which year construction began on the Picnic Area. The original plan included two loops set back from the Parkway, both serving recreational purposes. The first loop functioned as a designated picnic area for day use while the second loop acted as a campground. Plans for the Gas Station adjacent to the Picnic Area at Rocky Knob existed as early as 1936, however construction did not begin until 1949.

Primary access to the Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station is via a shared entrance drive. The Picnic Area contains two comfort stations, a picnic pavilion, a group parking area, individual parking slips, and approximately 100 picnic locations with associated tables and grills. The Picnic Area was created to facilitate recreation along the Parkway in the form of picnicking. This use continues today, along with hiking, as the recreation area's trail system is accessible here. Vehicular circulation in the Picnic Area consists of two single-lane loop roads that wind through the site. Narrow asphalt dirt paths permit pedestrian access to Picnic Area amenities like comfort stations, drinking fountains, and picnic sites. The one mile Picnic Loop Trail encircles the entire Picnic Area and ties into both the Black Ridge and Rock Castle Gorge Trails, allowing users of the Picnic Area to access the entirety of the Rocky Knob trail system.

The Rocky Knob Gas Station area was originally intended to provide gasoline, supplies, and services to travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway. This use continued until 1978, at which time the NPS converted the service station into the Rocky Knob Visitor Information Station. The NPS staffs the station seasonally. Automotive traffic enters this site from two entrances which form a loop in front of the Gas Station. Parking is provided in two places: a small lot northeast of the Gas Station accommodates seven cars, and a larger parking lot beyond the Picnic Area road fork provides space for 28 cars in opposing bays. There are three buildings in the Gas Station area.

Site Plan

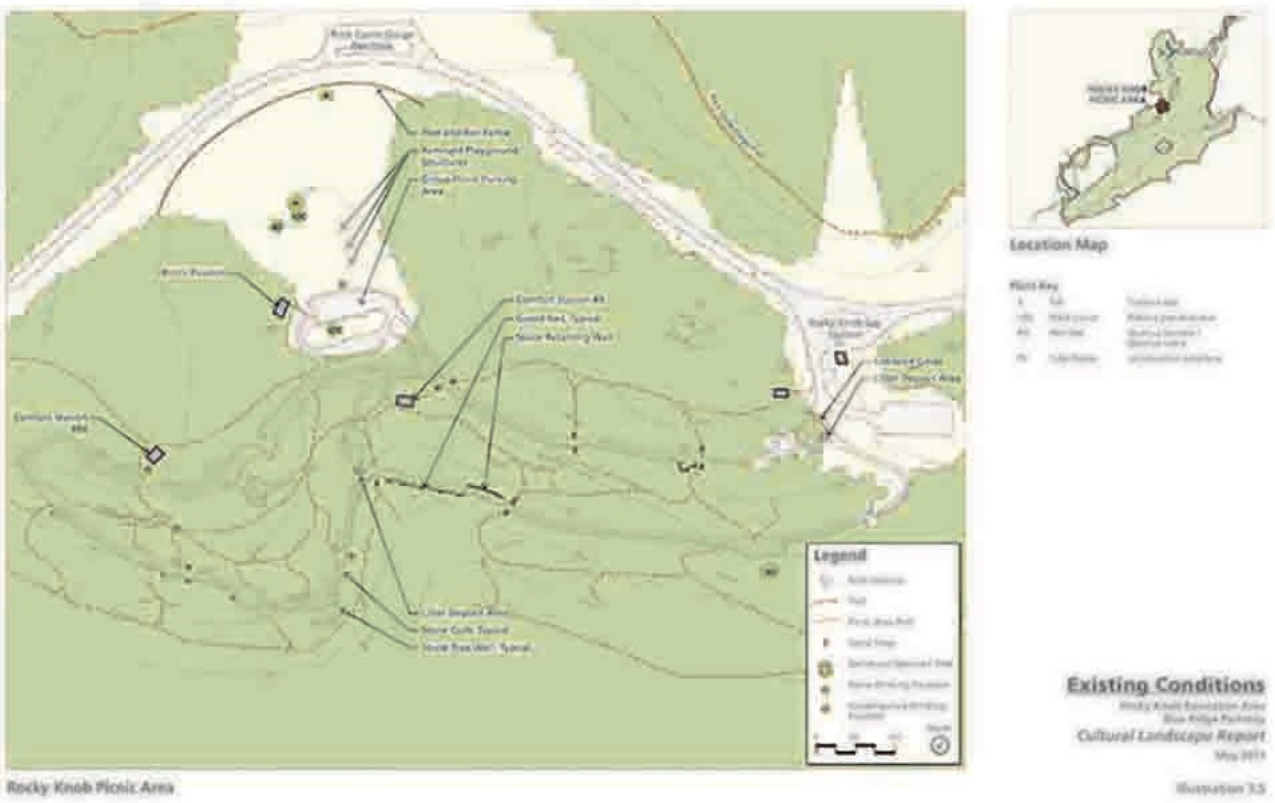


Figure 2 A. Picnic Area component landscape site plan. (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.97)

Figure 2 B. Gas Station component landscape site plan. (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.98)

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Rocky Knob Picnic Area
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	975908
Parent Landscape:	975906

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Blue Ridge Parkway - Rocky Knob Picnic Area - BLRI
Park Organization Code:	5140
Park Administrative Unit:	Blue Ridge Parkway

CLI Hierarchy Description

The Rocky Knob parent landscape – Rocky Knob Recreation Area – contains four component landscapes: Rocky Knob Campground, Rocky Knob Maintenance Area, Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station, and Parkway Section 1-S.

The Rocky Knob Recreation Area Campground was constructed north of the maintenance area in 1962 as an expanded version of the original 1937 campground, which is now the Picnic Area (see the Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape).

The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape was constructed beginning in 1937 on the picnic grounds. While the Gas Station was included in early plans, construction did not begin until 1949. The Picnic Area originally had a combined use, also serving as a campground until 1962. The Gas Station now serves as a visitor information center.

The Rocky Knob Maintenance Area was constructed beginning in 1940 in a large cleared area north of the Parkway. The area was intended to serve as a functional element necessary for running and constructing the Parkway. This area acts as a core of Parkway administrative offices, supplies storage area, and employee housing.

Construction began on Parkway Section 1-S in March of 1936. This section of the Blue Ridge Parkway includes The Saddle, Rock Castle Gorge, and Twelve O'clock Knob overlooks. The Saddle was the first overlook constructed along Section 1-S, followed by Twelve O'clock Overlook. Both were constructed during the pre-War and Planning era between 1933 and 1941. The Rock Castle Gorge Overlook was built in 1958, the last overlook constructed along Section 1-S.

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Inventory data, including condition, is from CLR and was approved by park in 2014. Additional info will be added to CLI in FY 18 in form of GIS maps and FMSS crosswalks. At that point, condition assessment will be reconfirmed with superintendent.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 03/14/2014

National Register Concurrence: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Date of Concurrence Determination: 09/07/2017

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

Through consultation with VA-DHR, VCRIS entries for BLRI's Humpback Rocks and Rocky Knob have been updated with correct GIS footprints, and contributing status. For this particular landscape, VCRIS ID# 080-5161 "Blue Ridge Parkway Historic District" is the primary resource. Additional VCRIS entries include: 080-5161-0153 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 009 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Comfort Station, Lower Loop; 080-5161-0154 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 084 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Comfort Station, Upper Loop; 080-5161-0313 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Wood Storage Shed ; 080-5161-0152 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 964 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Picnic Shelter

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

Foreword

Rocky Knob Recreation Area provides parkway visitors an opportunity to experience the scenic beauty and historic charm that make the Blue Ridge Parkway the most visited park unit in the National Park Service. From the stunning views of Rock Castle Gorge lying 2,000 feet below the numerous overlooks, to the miles of hiking trails, and historic primitive cabins, the Rocky Knob area offers campers, picnickers, and all Parkway visitors a unique experience. As one of the earliest developed areas along the parkway, the Rocky Knob area possesses beautifully preserved examples of Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era architecture and landscaping. As such, careful consideration must be given to the management of this area to ensure that these resources are preserved for future generations. The guidance offered in this report will allow us to accomplish this goal.

We would like to thank the staff of The Jaeger Company, in particular project leader Emmeline Morris and assistant project manager Daniel Lawson, for their thorough research, rigorous existing conditions documentation, and carefully considered recommendations. The parkway would also like to thank former Southeast Regional Office Cultural Landscapes Branch Chief and current Congaree Swamp Superintendent Tracy Stakely for his work as the primary NPS liaison on this report. SERO Acting Cultural Landscape Branch Chiefs David Hasty and Beth Byrd have managed the program wonderfully in Tracey's absence providing thorough reviews and invaluable input on the project at many stages. This study will be a useful tool for the continued management of this outstanding portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Monika Mayr

Acting Superintendent

Rocky Knob Recreation Area

Blue Ridge Parkway

Cultural Landscape Report

Approved By : _____ 3-24-14
Superintendent, Date
Blue Ridge Parkway

Recommended By : _____ 4/1/14
Chief, Cultural Resource Division Date
Southeast Region

Recommended By : _____ 4-2-14
Deputy Regional Director, Date
Southeast Region

Approved By : _____ 4/14/14
Regional Director, Date
Southeast Region

Geographic Information

Geographic Information & Location Map

State and County:

State:	North Carolina
County	Buncombe County

Size (Acres) 25

Land Tract Number(s)

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Rocky Knob Recreation Area contains over 4000 acres of mountainous land running northeast to southwest along the Patrick and Floyd county lines in southwestern Virginia. The Parkway and its associated right-of-way generally make up the northern boundary of the Rocky Knob Recreation Area, though many of the developed areas are found north of the Parkway. Route 8 generally defines the eastern boundary of the recreation area, while the slopes of Rock Castle Gorge comprise the southern and western boundaries. Land adjacent to Rocky Knob Recreation Area consists mostly of low-density residential and/or agricultural properties. This study identified five component landscapes located within the recreation area and developed by the NPS between the late 1930s and the early 1960s: Rocky Knob Campground, Rocky Knob Maintenance Area, Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station, and the Rocky Knob Trail Lodge Cabins. Although the Trail Lodge Cabins are a Rocky Knob Component Landscape, a detailed study of that site was not included in the scope of the Cultural Landscape Report.

The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape is comprised of about 25 acres. The Picnic Area is about 20 acres and the Gas Station covers 5 acres. The component landscape is located at Milepost 169 on the north side of the Parkway. The entrance drive first gives access to the Gas Station to the west, then continues northwest to the picnic area. The elevation at this location is 3,226 feet.

Location Map:

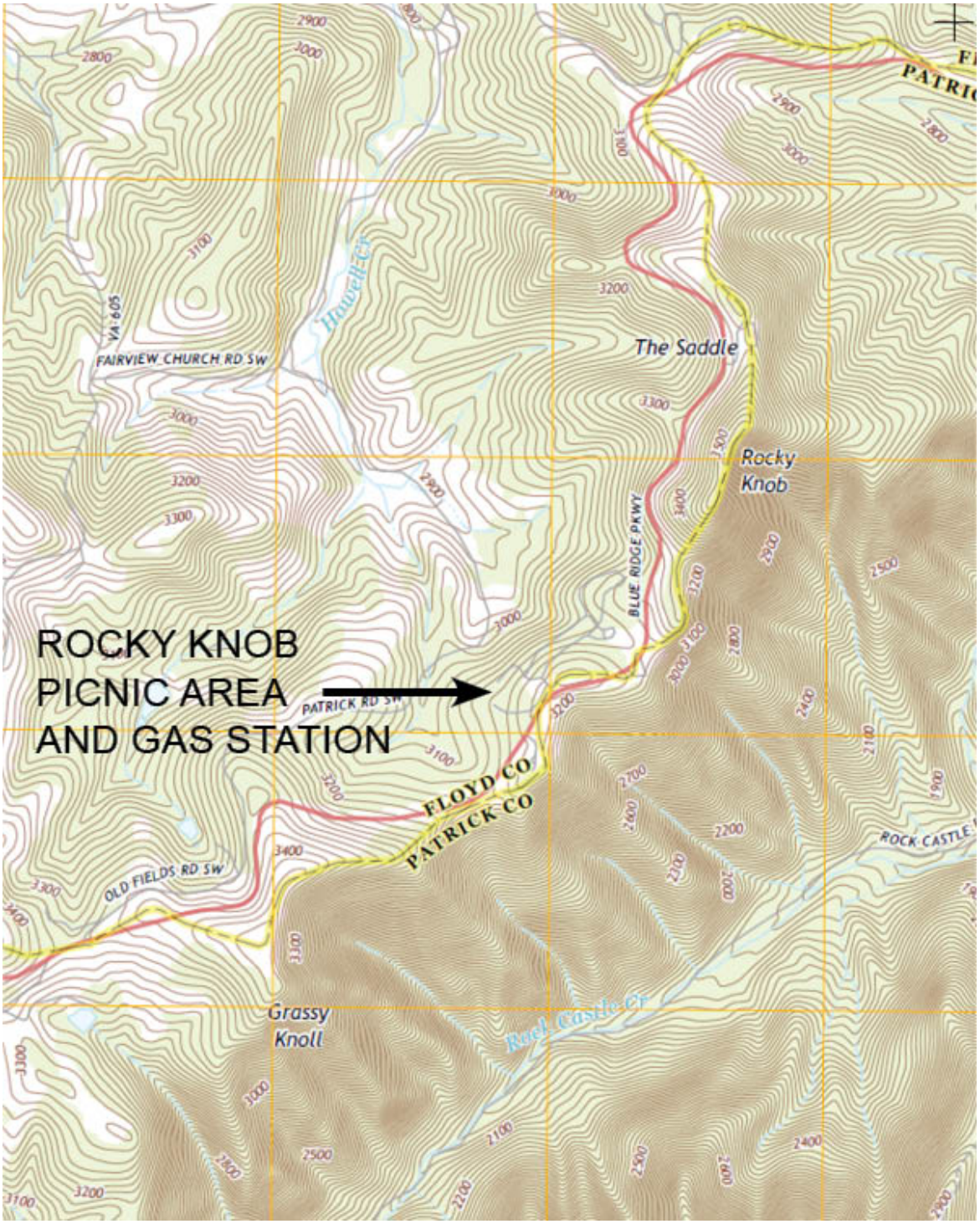


Figure 3. Location map

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The Blue Ridge Province forms the eastern portion the Appalachian Mountain region and contains the entirety of Rocky Knob Recreation Area. The Rocky Knob Recreation Area falls within the Southern Blue Ridge sub region. The Southern Blue Ridge consists of a gently rolling plateau up to 50 miles wide, bordered on the southeast by a pronounced escarpment abruptly descending to the Piedmont. Rocky Knob itself is an exception to the prevailing plateau character of the Blue Ridge in Southern Virginia, rising as an individual mountain from the surrounding land. It is the highest elevation in the area at 3,572 feet. Rock Castle Creek and Rock Castle Gorge divide Rocky Knob Recreation Area from the northeast to the southwest. Additional ridges and creeks, which form valleys and coves, further partition the interior of the recreation area.
Rocky Knob Recreation Area is composed of nearly all forested slopes. The managed landscapes surrounding the Maintenance Area component landscape are the exception. The majority of these areas are meadows and lawns kept open by either a mowing regime or grazing. The meadows and pastures feature meadow grasses and forbes with scattered bays of trees and shrubs, while the lawns feature turf and a variety of specimen trees and flowering shrubs native to the region. Two forest types dominate the forested portions of the recreation area, Southern Appalachian Oak Forest on the ridges and upland slopes, and Cove Forest along the lowland streams of the Rock Castle Gorge.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Rocky Knob straddles two Virginia counties, Patrick and Floyd Counties. The recreation area is located in Virginia’s 9th Congressional District.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Archeological evidence indicates that pre-historic Native Americans (Paleo Indian, Archaic, and Woodland cultures) inhabited the area for thousands of years. During the historic period, Canaway, Iroquois, and Cherokee were some of the tribes known to have inhabited the area. European settlers began moving into the area in the mid-18th century. By the 1790’s, English, German, French, Scottish and Irish immigrants settled in what is now Floyd County. While this area remained a predominantly agricultural region until the development of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the specific land use in the Picnic Area and Gas Station is unknown.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 04/14/2014

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

As part of a potential Blue Ridge Parkway National Historic Landmark nomination, the Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station receives a category of ‘Must Be Preserved and Maintained’ as a contributing component landscape.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Public Access:

Type of Interest: Unrestricted

Explanatory Narrative:

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Land Narrative:

National Register Information

Documentation Status:

Undocumented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Neither the Blue Ridge Parkway nor any of its constituent component landscapes—with the exception of Brinegar Cabin at Doughton Park—are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. National Register nomination is currently pending for Flat Top Manor, part of the Moses Cone Estate.

Some documentation has occurred for the Blue Ridge Parkway including draft Historic Resource Studies crafted in 1993 and 2005, and a draft National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination prepared in 2005. All of these cultural resource documents were prepared by Ian Firth, Professor Emeritus in the College of Environment and Design at the University of Georgia. The 2005 draft NHL nomination suggests the likely areas, aspects, and period of significance for the road corridor and associated resources. Although Firth's findings did not include Mission 66 era features, the 2012 CLR conclusions do find the Mission 66 era features contributing; hence the Mission 66 features within the Rocky Knob Recreation Area developed area are considered significant.

There currently are two contracts in place to complete the NHL nomination: the first being a contract for an inventory of all buildings, structures, bridges, tunnels and overlooks, to support section 7 of the NHL nomination. The inventory project started in the Fall of 2012 in preparation of the National Historic Landmark nomination which began in the Fall of 2013 and currently continues.

Concurrence Narrative:

Through consultation with VA-DHR, VCRIS entries for BLRI's Humpback Rocks and Rocky Knob have been updated with correct GIS footprints, and contributing status. For this particular landscape, VCRIS ID# 080-5161 "Blue Ridge Parkway Historic District" is the primary resource. Additional VCRIS entries include: 080-5161-0153 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 009 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Comfort Station, Lower Loop; 080-5161-0154 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 084 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Comfort Station, Upper Loop; 080-5161-0313 Rocky Knob Picnic Area Wood Storage Shed ; 080-5161-0152 Blue Ridge Parkway Building 964 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Picnic Shelter

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Contributing/Individual:	Contributing
National Register Classification:	Site
Significance Level:	National
Significance Criteria:	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
Significance Criteria:	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Creating Social Institutions and Movements
Subtheme:	Recreation
Facet:	Tourism
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Creating Social Institutions and Movements
Subtheme:	Social and Humanitarian Movements
Facet:	Historic Preservation Movement
Other Facet:	None

Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Developing the American Economy
Subtheme:	Transportation by Land and Air
Facet:	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Developing the American Economy
Subtheme:	Transportation by Land and Air
Facet:	Planned Roads, Highways and Freeways
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Architecture
Facet:	Rustic Architecture
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Landscape Architecture
Facet:	NPS Mission 66--Landscape Architecture
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Landscape Architecture
Facet:	Protection Of Natural And Cultural Resources
Other Facet:	None

Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Landscape Architecture
Facet:	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	CE 1939 - 1965
Historic Context Theme:	Transforming the Environment
Subtheme:	Conservation of Natural Resources
Facet:	Scenic Preservation
Other Facet:	None

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category:	Architecture
Area of Significance Category:	Conservation
Area of Significance Category:	Entertainment - Recreation
Area of Significance Category:	Landscape Architecture

Statement of Significance:

Rocky Knob Recreation Area is situated along Section 1-S, from Milepost 165.3 to 169.2, of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The roadway and the Recreation Area are part of the Parkway system. The Parkway in its entirety is significant under Criteria A and C, according to the Draft Historic Resource Study, commissioned to evaluate National Historic Landmark eligibility, which follows similar criteria to the National Register (Firth, 2005).

The Blue Ridge Parkway is significant under Criterion A, “because of its association with the history of American parkways—an important part of the American Parks movement and the history of transportation. It is the premier example of a national parkway designed for long distance motoring through rural scenery.” The Parkway developed in several phases that were associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of NPS and United States history. Beginning with the pre-war phase, associated with the public works program initiated under Roosevelt’s New Deal that helped build many parks and roadways, and later followed by the post-war Mission 66 program that addressed recreational pressures on National Parks and facilitated the completion of the Parkway. Section 1-S, as well as Rocky Knob Recreation Area, were among

the earliest developments of the parkway. In 1938, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established their first camp along the Parkway at Rocky Knob.

The Blue Ridge Parkway meets Criterion C, “as an exceptionally important work of design in the fields of landscape architecture and civil engineering; as a combination of scenic road and linear park, it represents a fusion of modern engineering with scenic landscape design. It was a recreational project of unprecedented scale and complexity, focused on the needs of motorists, and it illustrates a high point in the history of American parkways. As the first long distance, scenic national parkway, the intention of the Parkway was to provide a model for others. Its design is particularly notable for presenting a sequence of carefully framed and composed pictures of the Southern Appalachians, in the spirit of the Regionalist Movement of the 1930s. After the Second World War, it became clear that there would be no national network of long distance, scenic parkways, but redoubled efforts to complete this Parkway as one of only two examples of its kind. Therefore the significance of the Blue Ridge Parkway arises from its role as the first long distance, scenic national parkway.” The period of significance includes design styles that are representative of Pre-war and Construction, Resumption of Construction, and Mission 66.

As one of fifteen developed areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and one of just eight in the state of Virginia, Rocky Knob Recreation Area is historically significant because its historic structures and cultural landscapes physically represent the full range of National Park Service recreational design from its inception along the Blue Ridge Parkway in the late 1930s through the height of Mission 66 development in the mid-1960s. The Blue Ridge Parkway period of significance is from 1935 until 1965.The Rocky Knob Recreation Area period of significance begins with the initial development of the area in 1939 and continues through 1965, when Mission 66 projects brought earlier design ideas and goals to fruition.

The Rocky Knob Recreation Area and Rocky Knob Campground component landscape are significant under Criteria A and C. The Rocky Knob Recreation Area cultural landscape is significant under Criterion A as a recreation area along the Blue Ridge Parkway and as a destination for travel and tourism. Initially proposed in the 1934 Blue Ridge Parkway master plan as one of thirteen recreation areas at intervals along the parkway, Rocky Knob is one of eight recreation areas along the Virginia section. The Rocky Knob Recreation Area developed over the course of several decades, shaped by the vision and design of its early planners. The initial four supporting components required by each recreation area master plan included: 1) conservation of natural scenery, 2) facilities for active recreation, 3) provisions of food, lodging, and motor service in an attractive manner where it is not available, and 4) utility buildings for maintenance and operations of the parks and the Parkway.

The Rocky Knob Campground component landscape represents the recreational themes of historic significance such as camping, picnicking, and outdoor grilling. The Campground also represents the themes of rustic architecture, Mission 66 landscape architecture, and scenic preservation. Although the Campground was not constructed until 1962, features such as the vehicle circulation and split-face stone curbs are consistent with the design of the original campground, which was built in 1937. Some features within the campground are distinct to the Mission 66 era, such as the utilitarian architectural style of the comfort stations. These features, among others, are still extant today, reflecting the historic period of significance.

The Rocky Knob Maintenance Area component landscape represents historic significance as a supporting landscape within the Rocky Knob Recreation Area. The Maintenance Area was intended to provide a base for operation and maintenance of both the road and recreation areas. As such, it is associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history. It also embodies distinctive construction from the period of significance, ranging from CCC and WPA structures built in the early 1940s, to structures built during post WWII resumption of construction

The Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape is historically significant based on criterion A as a designed landscape that supported the American Parks movement and the history of transportation beginning with the pre-war phase and continuing through the post Mission 66 program. The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape were essential to long distance motoring along the Parkway and embody significance Criterion A.

Parkway Section 1-S, including The Saddle, Rock Castle Gorge, and Twelve O’clock Knob overlooks, is a historically significant component landscape within Rocky Knob Recreation Area. Section 1-S, including the

overlooks, is significant under Criterion A as a defining characteristic that made the Blue Ridge Parkway a national parkway designed for long distance motoring through rural scenery. It is also significant under Criterion C “as an exceptionally important work of design in the fields of landscape architecture and civil engineering…focused on the needs of motorists” (Firth, 2005).

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Designed Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Outdoor Recreation

Primary Current Use: Outdoor Recreation

Other Use/Function **Other Type of Use or Function**

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type Of Name
Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station	Both Current And Historic

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1934	Designed	Master plan for Blue Ridge Parkway route drafted and approved. The master plan included Rocky Knob as one of thirteen proposed recreation areas … Landscape Architects: Thomas Chalmers Vint, Gilmore Clarke, Stanley Abbott, Edward Abbuehl, Hendrick van Gelder; Engineers: Jay Downer, William Austin
CE 1935	Built	Construction began on the Blue Ridge Parkway at section 2-A in North Carolina. In Virginia, construction began at section 1-P, north of Rocky Knob.
CE 1935	Built	Construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway began on section 1-S through Rocky Knob.
CE 1936	Designed	Blue Ridge Parkway master plan updated…Assumed same team for master plan update - Landscape Architects: Thomas Chalmers Vint, Gilmore Clarke, Stanley Abbott, Edward Abbuehl, Hendrick van Gelder; Engineers: Jay Downer, William Austin

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1936	Designed	Designs for a coffee shop and gas station were developed…Hall
CE 1936	Designed	General Development Plan created for Rocky Knob; it was the first of the plans as required by NPS policy. It indicated locations of trails, shelters, campground and picnic facility, soil improvement sites, and buildings slated for demolition…Landscape Architects: Thomas Chalmers Vint, Gilmore Clarke, Stanley Abbott, Edward Abbuehl, Hendrick van Gelder [same design team assumed]
CE 1937	Built	Construction began on Picnic Area.
CE 1938	Built	3,500 acres had been acquired for Rocky Knob Recreation Area. CCC established first camp, known as NP-14, in Rock Castle Gorge, in what is now Rocky Knob Recreation Area.
CE 1941	Built	Emergency Relief Administration (ERA) crew built Comfort Station #9 near the intersection of the picnic and camping loops.
CE 1941	Built	The NPS constructed a new vehicular turnaround and group parking area with playing fields, a playground, horseshoe courts, and seesaws in a large field near the intersection of the picnic and camping loops.
CE 1941	Designed	Rocky Knob master plan (refinement of 1936 plan)…Thomas Chalmers Vint, Gilmore Clarke, Stanley Abbott, Edward Abbuehl, Hendrick van Gelder; Architect: Kenneth McCarter
CE 1946 - 1955	Altered	NPS crews likely repaved the trails, driving lanes, and parking slips at the Picnic Area.
CE 1949 - 1950	Built	Rocky Knob Gas Station constructed.
CE 1951	Built	Two small wooden building located north of Gas Station constructed (one documented in Parkway Archives in 1953 as “Wood Storage Shed”).
CE 1953	Altered	NPS staff began replacing wooden picnic tables with new ones built of concrete with chestnut plank seat slats.
CE 1955 - 1956	Built	NPS Day Labor constructed Comfort Station #84 along what was then the campground loop in the Picnic Area component landscape.
CE 1955 - 1959	Designed	Rocky Knob master plan updated as part of Mission 66 initiative…Sam Weems, Edward Abbuehl, [Henrick van Gelder, Thomas Chalmers Vint, Gilmore Clarke] [names with brackets are assumed]
CE 1959	Designed	A new master plan called for the construction of a new campground along the Parkway near the maintenance area to separate the two uses at the picnic area…Sam Weems
CE 1962	Built	The Parkway opened a new 110-unit campground at Rocky Knob and converted the old campground loop for picnic use, adding 56 units to the picnic grounds.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1965	Designed	Rocky Knob master plan updated, including plans for the construction of additional staff lodging between the maintenance area and the existing employee residences, the conversion of the Gas Station into a Visitor Contact Station, the construction of a 48-unit lodge and restaurant on the Grassy Knoll, the obliteration of the Trail Lodge Cabins, and the recommendation to purchase in-holding property within Rock Castle Gorge.
CE 1966	Altered	NPS staff altered the parking area located along the side of the Gas Station, expanding the parking area and eliminating a planting bed. Staff likely added the pink granite curb that exists here today along the perimeter of the old and new spaces.
CE 1973	Designed	Parkway staff created an alternate circulation design around the Gas Station and made the changes the following year.
CE 1977	Built	NPS staff built a large group picnic pavilion.
CE 1978	Altered	The Gas Station concession ceased and the building was converted into a visitor contact station…Gary Everhardt
CE 2000	Altered	Late 2000s. The NPS reset the stone walkways surround the Gas Station/visitor information center.
CE 2009	Built	NPS constructed a new stone drinking fountain alongside the Gas Station building.

Physical History:

This physical history has been adapted from the 2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report Site History. The citations were converted from footnotes in the CLR to parenthetical citations in this CLI. As this physical history only covers the Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station, for an overarching physical history of Rocky Knob Recreation Area, refer to that parent landscape physical history.

Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station Component Landscape Site History

In the 1930s, the NPS based their campground designs on the work of Emilio P. Meinecke, a plant pathologist who worked as a consultant for both the NPS and the United States Forest Service. Meinecke recommended careful site selection for campgrounds based on soil types and clear organization of vehicular access and campsites, in order to limit damage to natural settings and systems. The designers of the Picnic Area component landscape at Rocky Knob followed these principles when laying out both the original combined campground and picnic area (Firth, 2005, 198).

Parkway staff in Roanoke prepared plans for the picnic area and campground at Rocky Knob and construction was underway by 1937. The plans show two loops set back from the Parkway in a protected cove. The first loop functioned as a picnic area with a variety of parking slip configurations to accommodate a wide range of group sizes. The second loop acted as the campground, with separate areas for tent and trailer camping, comprising sixteen campsites. Each site contained a fireplace and picnic table. WPA workers built fireplaces designed by the Roanoke office to blend in with nearby rock outcroppings, lining them with a type of locally quarried soapstone. According to

Firth, “the landscape architects in the Roanoke office gave considerable thought to the design of small items in the picnic and campgrounds...they were guided by the precepts of simplicity, economy, and rustic charter illustrated in National Park Service manuals” (Firth, 1993, 124). Parkway staff designed tables made from salvaged chestnut wood. Rock Castle Gorge resident Era Wade recalled her husband working for the CCC on the construction of features within the Picnic Area, “He, he helped makin' tables an ' them rock walls around there, where they have down there in the picnic area” (Era Wade. Oral History, 5). The dry-stack walls, tree wells, stone curbing, and culvert headwalls highlighted the rustic-style stonework typical of early Parkway construction. According to Jolly, “Masonry in the early years was used in a manner that would allow the visitor on foot to see its beauty blending into the land” (Jolley, 1987, 26). Development plans from 1940 also show six stone drinking fountains located throughout the picnic and campgrounds. It is unclear how many of these fountains were actually constructed. Rustic log guardrails that blended seamlessly into the surrounding forest lined the steeper sections of the vehicular loops, and construction drawings called for log curb in some locations.

By 1941, overcrowding at picnic areas throughout the Parkway had become a problem. Church, school and club groups were the most intensive users and Parkway staff developed plans to provide “group size” facilities at all of the recreation areas to accommodate these visitors. At Rocky Knob, workers constructed a new vehicular turnaround and group parking area along with playing fields, a playground, horseshoe courts, and seesaws in a large open field near the intersection of the picnic and camping loops (Quin, 1997, pp. 168, 214).

The same year, an Emergency Relief Administration (ERA) crew built Comfort Station #9 near the intersection of the picnic and camping loops. Plainer in design and lacking the heavy timber construction that characterized the very first buildings on the parkway, this comfort station nonetheless featured rustic and regional touches including a flagstone porch floor, an exterior clad in vertical board and batten, and a shake roof (Firth, 2005, 202). Hall probably designed this building as well; drawing inspiration and detailing directly from a vernacular barn he photographed along the Parkway near Tuggle Gap, in Rocky Knob.

Construction plans for the picnic area and campground included preliminary drawings of a gas station, concession area/coffee shop, and associated parking lot on the west side of the entrance to the driving loops. These facilities also appear on the 1941 master plan in a similar configuration. Hall produced the earliest design for the coffee shop and gas station in 1936. Parkway staff proceeded with planning and design of these features during this era of development, and while they never constructed the coffee shop, they did eventually build the gas station and parking area after World War II.

Although construction work halted during the war, planning for the Parkway and for additional amenities at Rocky Knob continued, albeit at a slower place. Parkway staff continued to refine plans for the Gas Station and Coffee Shop at Rocky Knob during the war years. The Picnic Area and Campground plans proposed improved amenities including a second comfort station, a cabin area, ball fields, swings, and seesaws.

During this period, a debate over the planning of recreational activities along the Parkway came to a head. The regional office in Richmond, took issue with the 1942 and 1943 versions of the Master Plan, which proposed the development of several lakes and other active recreation facilities like ball fields in recreation areas including Rocky Knob. In a memorandum to the Regional Director, Abbott adopted a conciliatory tone and agreed that ball fields and playgrounds seemed inappropriate, but argued that there were advantages in concentrating group activities in specific areas. He proposed adopting a policy that no playground, swimming pool, or other active recreation facility intrude on an area of natural beauty and agreed that the proposals to develop recreation facilities beside lakes a distance from the parkway route should be dropped (Firth, 2005, 228-229). Thus, future Master Plans for Rocky Knob no longer included a large lake in Rock Castle Gorge, a swimming pool adjacent to the picnic area, or additional ball fields in the picnic area and campground.

By the start of 1947, the majority of staff members of the Public Roads Administration (PRA, formerly the Bureau of Public Roads) and the NPS returned to their positions and were ready to continue the

design process for the Parkway. Initial funding during this era focused on repairs to the Parkway, which had deteriorated during the war. Funding priorities then shifted and one of the top priorities for Weems after the war was to secure the provision of food, lodging, and motor services along the Parkway as envisioned in the prewar plan, resulting in additional construction projects in recreation areas, including the Gas Station at Rocky Knob.

In 1950, Weems reported that construction of the Gas Station at Rocky Knob was complete and another nearly identical one at Crabtree Meadows was almost finished (Firth, 2005, 160). A third gas station was already open for business further south along the Parkway at Doughton Park.
According to Firth, “The design of new park buildings in the post-war period continued to be based on vernacular forms, but there was a new attitude to the selection of materials and employment of pioneer building techniques” (Firth, 1993, 128). The Gas Station at Rocky Knob was built adjacent to the Picnic Area, on the west side of the entrance to the loop roads, in accordance with 1937 plans.

Rustic-type architecture, frequently associated with parks, was tried in the CCC days, but post-war conditions called for permanence and maintenance-free construction (Firth, 1993, 128). The split shakes used on the smaller Parkway buildings were used for aesthetic reasons, but maintenance and fire hazard considerations dictated the use of something more durable for larger buildings. The solution: a stained concrete shingle that went well with native stone masonry, rough-sawn boards, and exposed heavy beams.

The Gas Station is the best example of this post-war shift in the architecture along the Parkway within Rocky Knob. Construction plans for the building called for the use of the new shingle type as well as other new construction materials, including concrete block walls faced with vertical board and batten. The modern walls were durable and easier to maintain while continuing the established rustic aesthetic for architecture along the Parkway. Rather than using a flagstone floor, the architect specified modern linoleum with a flagstone pattern, using another modern material that cost less and still appeared rustic.

Designed to emulate a mountain farmhouse that expanded over time with multiple additions and alterations, the Gas Station has similarities to the Pump House, built in the Rocky Knob Recreation Area eight years earlier by the CCC. The two buildings share a roofline and porch overhang, but the Gas Station abandons the rustic timber construction and wooden shakes of the Pump House in favor of more modern materials. The architecture of the Gas Station could be described as a plainer, more economical version of the pre-war rustic style.

A planting plan for the Gas Station developed by the Roanoke office shows the continued use of native plants within the recreation areas, proposing a variety of understory trees and shrubs planted around the new building.
The NPS developed prewar plans for a Coffee Shop at Rocky Knob located behind the Gas Station, but no construction occurred.

Developments in the Picnic Area and Campground at Rocky Knob were relatively minor during the Resumption of Construction era from 1946-1955. NPS crews likely paved or repaved the trails, driving lanes, and parking slips in this period. In 1953, Parkway staff began replacing the wooden picnic tables with new ones built of concrete and stone (Samuel P. Weems, “Superintendent's Annual Report,” 1953, 4). At Rocky Knob, crews executed the tables entirely in concrete, except for the thick planks of chestnut used as seat slats. The Roanoke office also developed a standard for gates along the parkway during this period. Construction drawings dated 1951 show the new heavy timber gate standard approved for use throughout the Parkway.

Two identical small wooden buildings were built near the Gas Station in 1951. They were possibly designed to serve a horseback riding concession that operated at this site until the late 1950s or early 1960s according to park staff. The rustic wooden frame structures may have functioned as either ticket booths or hay storage. A building file in the Parkway Archives that dates to 1953 notes the use of one building as “Wood Storage Shed,” indicating that the function of this building likely evolved over time. One building is located to the north of the gas station near a small rock outcropping, while the other is located in an area of woodland to the southeast of the larger parking lot.

NPS Day Labor constructed a new comfort station in 1955-1956 along the campground loop. The building, Comfort Station #84, shared the same basic floor plan and dimensions as the previous comfort stations along the Parkway, but abandoned the rustic aesthetic in favor of a more modern and standardized approach. Unadorned concrete block punctuated with larger single pane corner windows defined the façade and a nearly flat roof made the exterior appear modern, streamlined, and reflective of 1950s architectural tastes.

During the Mission 66 period, from 1956-1966, Superintendent Sam Weems developed a revised master plan for Rocky Knob calling for the construction of a new campground along the Parkway near the maintenance area. In 1959, he submitted the plan and reported that an “unsatisfactory situation” had arisen at the old combination camping and picnic area in which campers had to pass through the picnic area to reach their sites while picnickers were spilling over into the campground. Weems saw the need to separate the two uses of the site and proposed establishing a new and expanded campground on a knoll to the north of the maintenance area. The NPS approved the proposal, and in 1962, the Parkway opened a new 110-unit campground at Rocky Knob. NPS staff converted the old campground loop for picnic use, adding 56 units to the picnic grounds (Quin, 1997, 216).

With the construction of the new campground near the Maintenance Area, Parkway staff repurposed the original camping loop for use as additional picnic grounds. Picnicking was quite popular at the time and with Americans’ love affair of their automobiles arguably at its heyday during this period, Parkway visitors embraced the expansion of the Picnic Area. Parkway staff built new picnic tables, using the same concrete and wood design already in use in the original picnic area. Workers left original fireplaces in place and added new grills where needed. In addition, the NPS likely replaced the original round timber guardrails lining portions of the roadway and select parking slips with modern squared off versions by the close of this period.
Vegetation management had allowed the surrounding forest to fill in the picnic area vicinity to the proposed wood line indicated on the PLUMS.

At some point prior to 1966, NPS staff altered the parking area located along the side of the Gas Station. The change expanded the parking area, eliminating a planting bed and adding a few spaces to accommodate additional visitors. Crews likely installed the pink granite curb that exists here today along the perimeter of the new and old spaces. Two sections fence that extended into the Picnic Area, as indicated on the PLUMs, were removed from the landscape by 1966.

Playfields and other active recreation activities ceased during the Post Mission 66 period (1967-present). Parkway staff built a large group picnic pavilion during this period. Smart View contains an identical pavilion in its picnic area, indicating that this structure was a Parkway standard building at one time. Parkway staff made some changes to Comfort Station #9, including the installation of an asphalt roof and some alterations to the entrance enclosures. NPS staff replaced most of the original fireplaces with newer catalog grills and many of the drinking fountains have either been lost or replaced with contemporary versions. NPS staff no longer uses wood for the picnic table seats; instead, they installed thinner slats constructed of recycled plastic on all of the picnic area tables.

In 1973, Parkway staff sketched a plan to alter the circulation around the Gas Station. The plan called for the enlargement of the curbed median that held the gasoline pumps. NPS crews reworked the island according to the plan in the same year. In 1978, Parkway superintendent Gary Everhardt notified National Park Concessions, Inc. that it was to cease operating the gas station at Rocky Knob. Everhardt explained that commercial service stations were now available both four miles north at Tuggle Gap and eight miles south at Meadows of Dan. These stations not only provided more services and longer hours, but also provided them to the motorist at a lower cost. The Parkway converted the building to a visitor contact station (Quin, 1997, 217). The NPS likely removed the gasoline pumps the same year.

In 1977, the NPS built a Picnic Pavilion within the Picnic Area, nestled into the woodland edge at the northeastern corner of the Picnic Area’s main parking lot. Constructed in a rustic style that is in keeping with early Parkway design character, this building features exposed log construction set on a mortared stone foundation.

In the late 2000s, the NPS reset the stone walkways surrounding the Gas Station and constructed a new stone drinking fountain alongside the building in 2009. A large specimen tree located in the grass median between the Gas Station and the Parkway died during this period and NPS staff did not replace it.

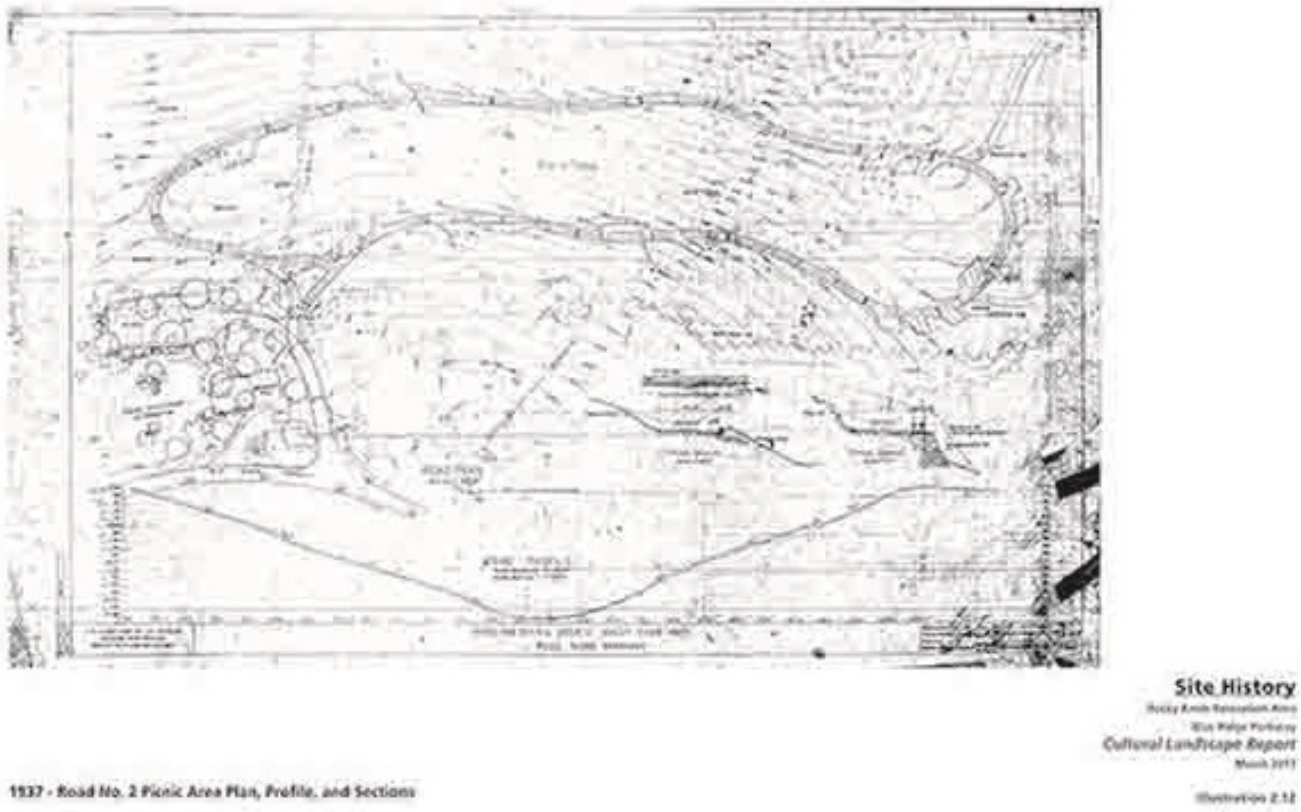
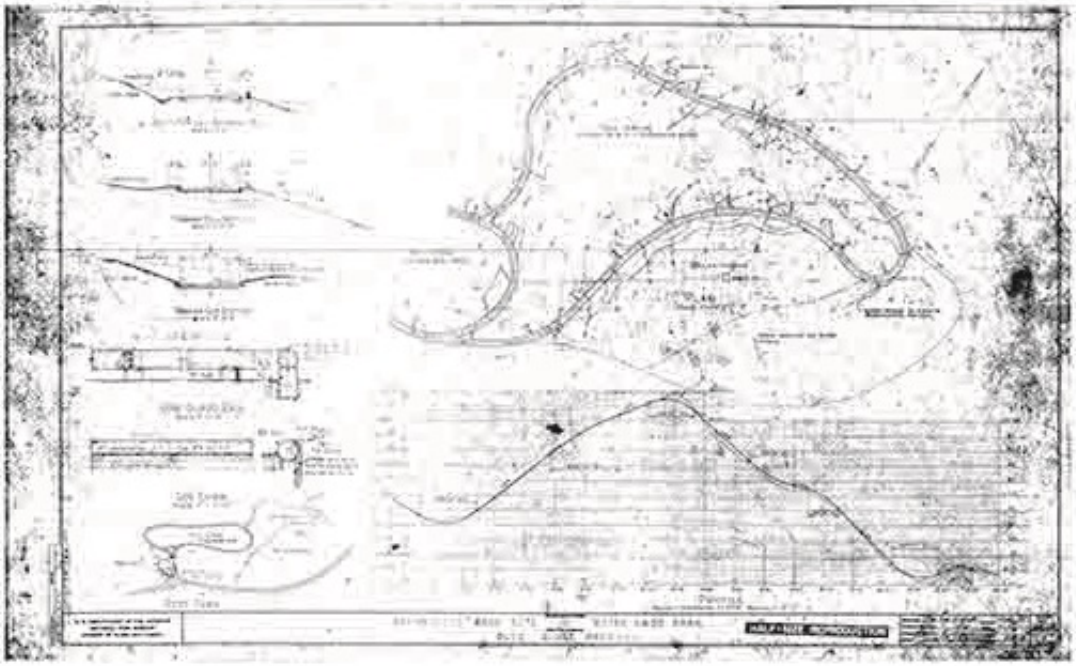


Figure 4. Road No. 2 Picnic Area Plan, Profile, and Sections, 1937 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.51)

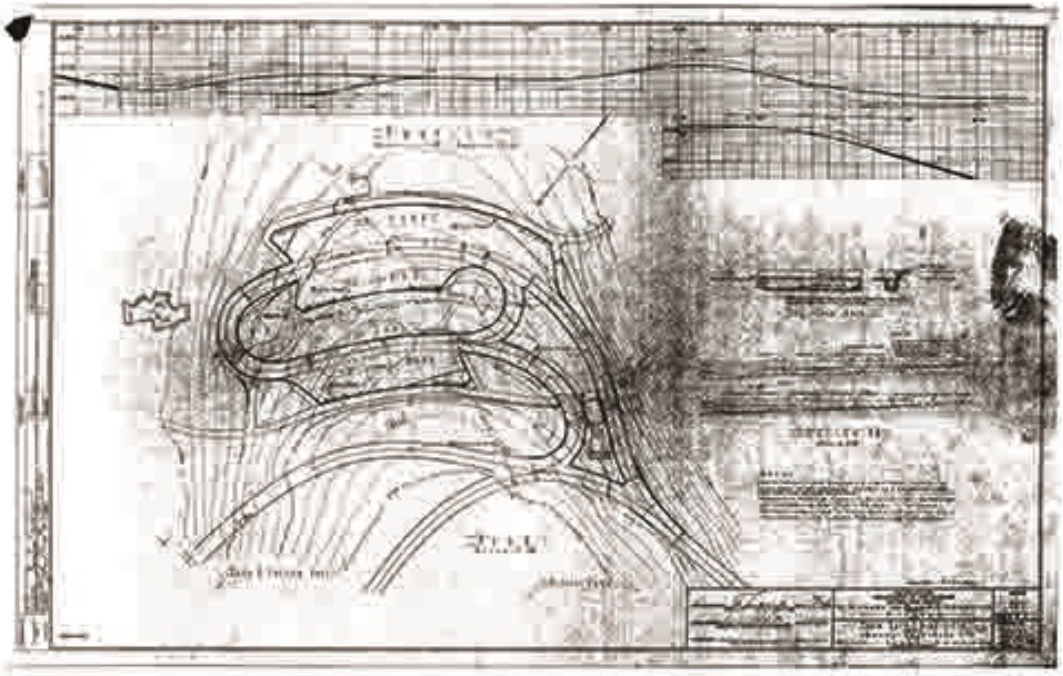


Site History
Rocky Knob Recreation Area
Blue Ridge Parkway
Cultural Landscape Report
March 2013

1938 · Campground Area No. 1 Sections, Plans, and Profile

Illustration 2.13

Figure 5. Campground Area No. 1 Sections, Plans, and Profile, 1938. (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.55)

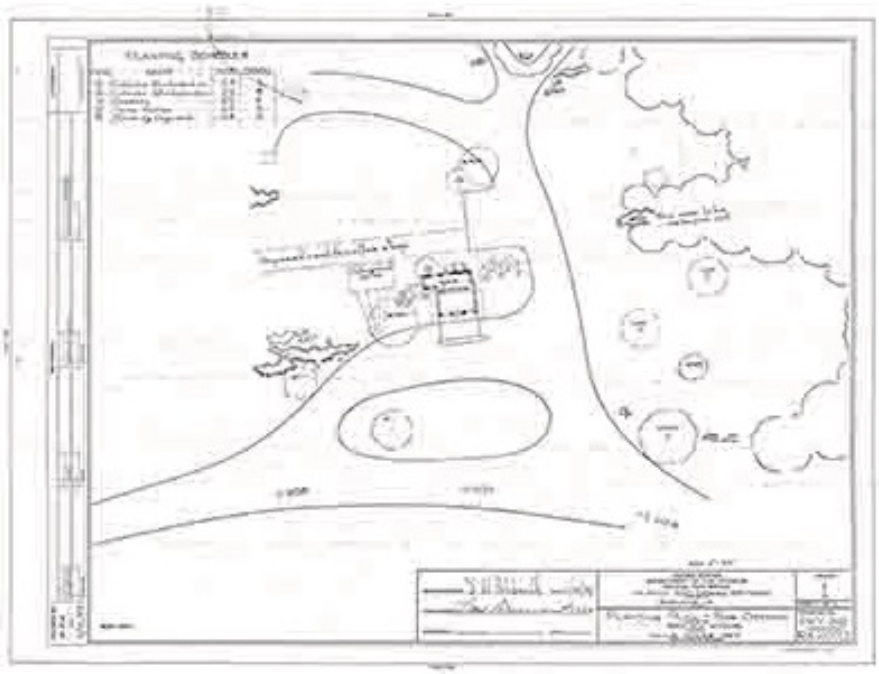


Site History
Rocky Knob Recreation Area
Blue Ridge Parkway
Cultural Landscape Report
March 2013

1940 · Cabin Area and Play Field · Camp and Trailer Area Profile, Plan, Sections, and Detail

Illustration 2.14

Figure 6. Cabin Area and Play Field – Camp and Trailer Area Profile, Plan, Sections, and Detail, 1940. (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.57)



1949 - Planting Plan - Gas Station

Figure 7. Planting Plan – Gas Station, 1949. (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.71)

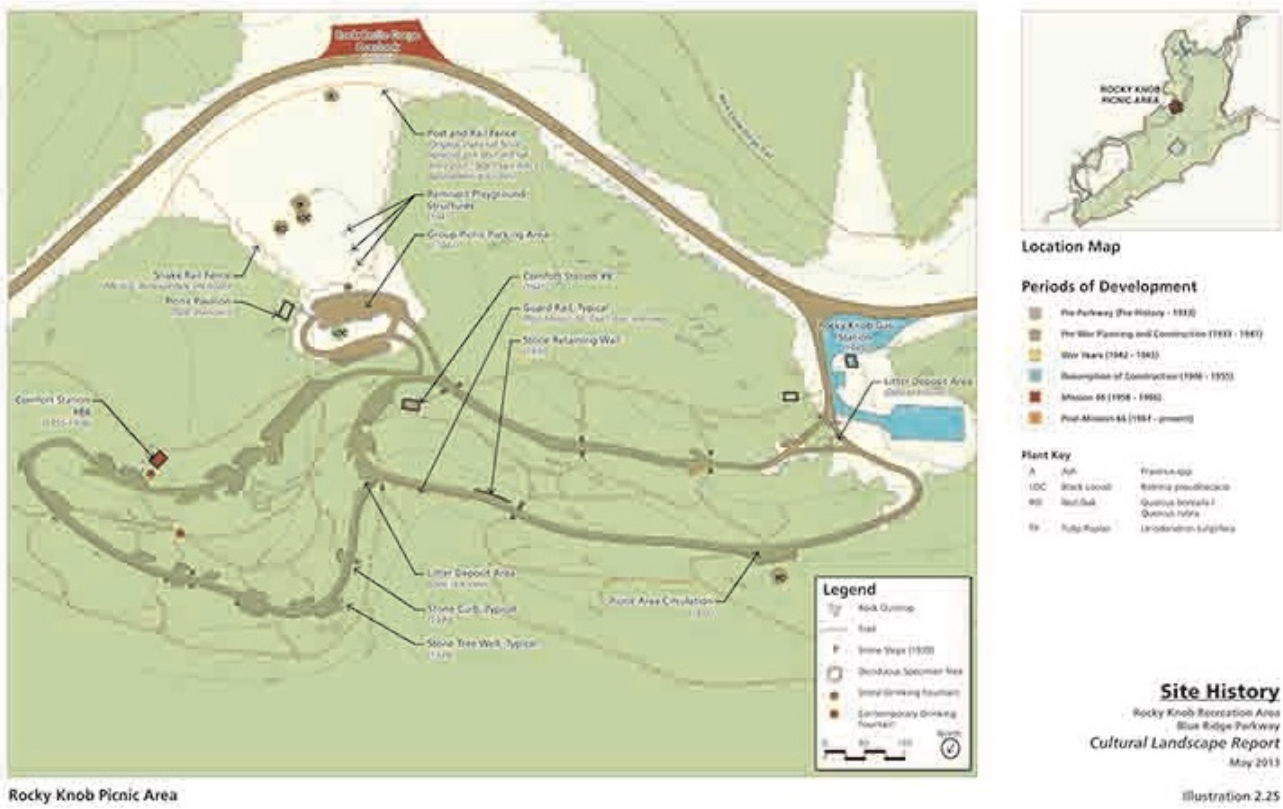


Figure 33. Picnic Area Site History (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.97)

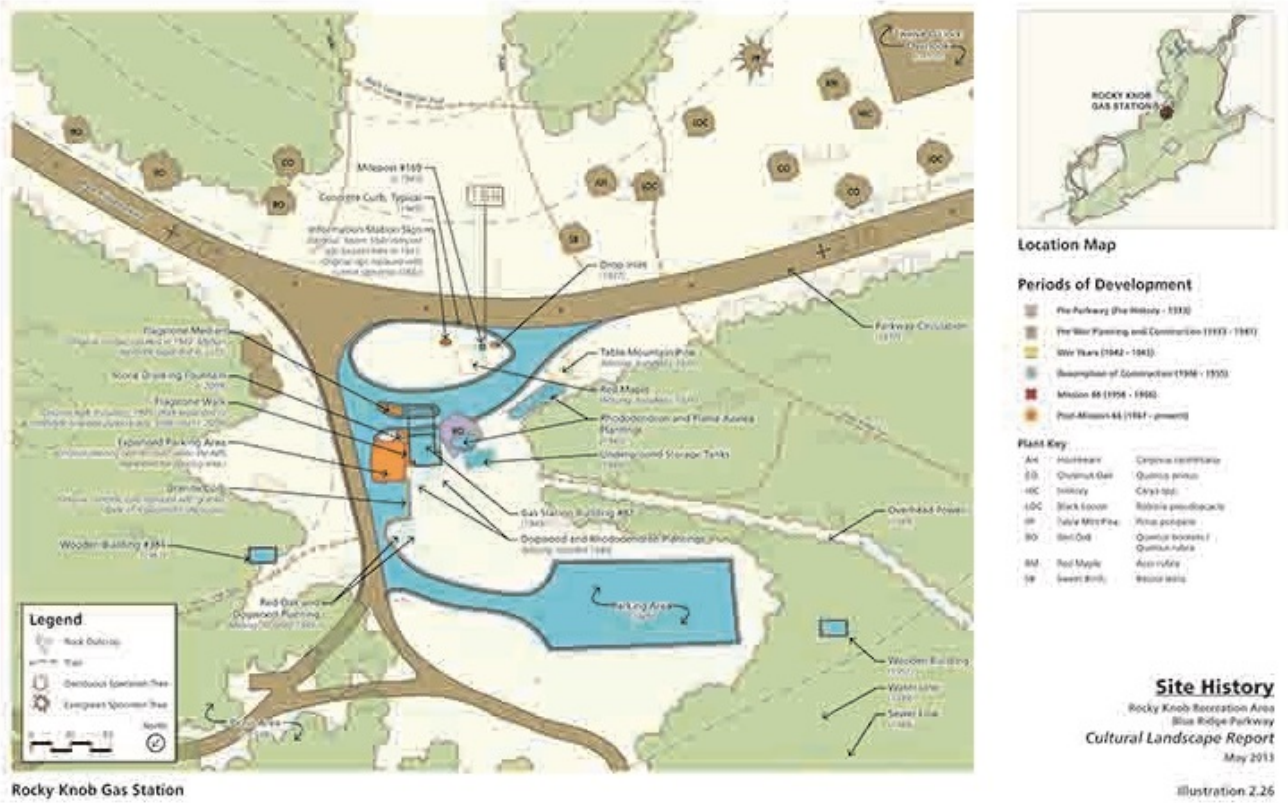


Figure 34. Gas Station Site History (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.99)

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape, within the Rocky Knob Recreation Area developed area, contains landscape features related to the landscape characteristics of Land Use, Vegetation, Circulation, Buildings and Structures, Views and Vistas, and Small-Scale Features. This section provides an overview of these existing features, as well as a discussion of their integrity related to the historic significance of the parent landscape, Rocky Knob Recreation Area. The following landscape characteristics were less relevant to the Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station: Archeological Sites, Natural Systems and Features, Cluster Arrangement, Constructed Water Features, Cultural Traditions, and Topography.

Landscape Characteristic Summary

Primary land uses within the Picnic Area and Gas Station during the period of significance include passive recreation, tourism, and utilitarian. The land use at the Gas Station specifically has shifted from utilitarian to interpretation. Overall land use, however, has remained consistent and retains a high degree of integrity.

In general, the vegetation at the Picnic Area is woodland. Observed species are consistent with the list of species included on the PLUMs for this area, including northern red oak, hickory, chestnut oak, tulip poplar, flame azalea, mountain laurel, and rosebay rhododendron. In addition, there is a large open area consisting of mown grass with specimen trees.

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation remain essentially the same as it was throughout the period of significance. The Picnic Area and Gas Station are located next to one another on the north side of the Parkway at Milepost 169. Vehicular circulation at the Picnic Area consists of two single-lane loop roads that wind through the site, one mile in length, creating a distorted figure eight pattern in plan view. Automotive traffic enters the Gas Station site from the Parkway from two entrances, one of which doubles as the Picnic Area entrance. Narrow asphalt or dirt paths permit pedestrian access to Picnic Area amenities like comfort stations, drinking fountains and picnic sites, weaving through the centers of the loop roads and extending beyond them to provide access to key features.

A total of six buildings exist in the Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape, built between 1941 and 1977. The buildings include Comfort Stations #9 and #84, built in the Picnic Area in 1941 and 1956 respectively. Comfort Station #9 is located near the center of the Picnic Area figure eight loop road. Comfort Station #84 is located at the east end of the Picnic Area loop road. The Gas Station was built in 1949 at the entrance to the Picnic Area. Two small wooden buildings were built near the Gas Station in 1951 on opposite sides of the Picnic Area entrance drive, set back from the road.

One planned view is located across the Parkway from the Gas Station, overlooking the countryside to the southeast. NPS staff continue to actively maintain this planned view. A view from the parking area adjacent to the Picnic Pavilion includes a large open field with a post and rail fence, a distant dramatic curve in the Parkway, and the Rock Castle Gorge Overlook area on the opposite side of the Parkway, which creates an extended visual connection.

Small-scale features that exist in the Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape include grills, stone fireplaces, picnic tables, a stone retaining wall, stone tree wells, drinking fountains, entrance gates, guardrails, stairs, stone curbs, signage, fencing, litter deposit areas, a fire hydrant, planters, and drainage structures. Within the Picnic Area, picnic sites typically include a picnic table and grill or stone fireplace. Other small-scale features at the Picnic Area include a stone retaining wall, stone steps, stone tree wells, stone curbing, drinking fountain, entrance gates, guardrail, signage, litter deposit areas, and fencing. Small-scale features associated with the Gas Station include rolled concrete curbs, a concrete drainage structure, fire hydrant and hose reel, signage, a drinking fountain, and planters. Most historic small-scale features remain present in the landscape today, but

many have been modified.

Aspects of Integrity Summary

1. Location: Located on the north side of the Parkway, the Picnic Area and Gas Station are set next to one another. The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape and contributing features have remained in the same location since construction began on the site in 1937, retaining a high level of integrity. The two primary areas of activity include the Picnic Area and the Gas Station area, which is now used as a visitor information center.

2. Materials: The materials used for the Rocky Knob Picnic Area and Gas Station, such as ‘Rocky Knob Black Stone’ slate curbs, concrete curbs, drainage structures, and retaining walls, stone drinking fountains, etc., remain intact. Some materials, such as wooden signs and picnic tables, have been replaced. Therefore, the component landscape retains a moderate level of integrity.

3. Design: The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape retains a high level of design integrity. The plan, form, space, and style of the area are consistent with the design during the period of significance.

4. Setting: The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape setting is consistent with that of the period of significance and retains a high level of integrity. The existing woodland setting is consistent with that indicated on the PLUMs.

5. Workmanship: A high level of integrity is evident in the workmanship within the Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape. The gas station building represents the shift in the post war era from the simple rustic vernacular design and materials typical prior to the war, to the use of more modern materials and workmanship techniques.

6. Feeling: The current feeling associated with the Picnic Area and Gas Station is consistent with the feeling of the area during the period of significance. While the Gas Station is now used as a visitor information center instead of a utilitarian visitor stop, the area still functions as a place for visitors to stop for necessities along the Parkway – instead of fuel it is now information. In general, the sensory experience of sights, sounds, and scents remains consistent with the period of significance.

7. Association: The Picnic Area and Gas Station component landscape retains a high degree of association integrity. Many of the construction methods, design, and engineering practices represented in the buildings, structures, and circulation are examples from earlier periods of significance for the Rocky Knob Recreation Area, including the Pre-war Planning and Construction from 1933-1941 and the Resumption of Construction period from 1946-1955. The surrounding lands also remain relatively unchanged and the Parkway itself is still used for its intended purpose.

Landscape Characteristic:
Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions: Construction was underway on the Picnic Area by 1937. The 1937 plans show two loops set back from the Parkway in a protective cove. The first loop functioned as a picnic area with a variety of parking slip configurations to accommodate a wide range of group sizes. The second loop acted as the campground, with separate areas for tent and trailer camping, comprising sixteen campsites. By 1941, overcrowding had become a problem and Parkway staff developed plans to provide “group size” facilities to all of the recreation areas. Workers constructed a new vehicular turnaround and group parking area along with an area for active recreational activities, such as playing fields and a playground, in the large open field near the intersection of the picnic and camping loops.

Construction began on the Rocky Knob Gas Station in 1949. Primary access to the Rocky Knob Picnic Area is via a shared entrance drive with the Gas Station located at Milepost 169 on Parkway right. The Gas Station is on the west side of the Picnic Area access drive, with two access points that allow a drive-through circulation. A median divides the paved area in front of the gas station. There is a small parking area behind the gas station, with a much larger one to the west accessed further down the Picnic Area access drive.

Existing Conditions: The spatial organization of both the Picnic Area and Gas Station are relatively unchanged since the periods of significance. The small parking area near the back of the gas station was expanded in the Post Mission 66 era, when the gas station was converted to a visitor center.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Picnic Area

CLI Feature ID: 179479

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas Station

CLI Feature ID: 179481

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic:
Land Use

Historic Conditions: When the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA) finished construction of the area in 1939, the Picnic Area served as both the picnic and camping area for the park. The first loop was designated for picnicking, while the second loop was devoted to trailer and tent camping. This combination of uses continued for over 20 years until a new and greatly expanded Campground opened in 1962, on a knoll to the north. At that time, the NPS converted the second loop in the Picnic Area from trailer and tent camping to an additional picnic-only loop.

The intended uses of the Gas Station landscape are two-fold. Originally, this site was to contain an area for recreation and an area for roadside service and supply procurement. The NPS planned a coffee and sandwich shop in this location for visitor recreation, similar to the one located in Doughton Park. The NPS did not complete the coffee shop building. They did construct a small parking area designed to accommodate 28 cars, intended to serve the proposed coffee shop.
The gas station provided gasoline, supplies, and services.

Existing Conditions: The NPS created the Rocky Knob Picnic Area to facilitate recreation along the Parkway in the form of picnicking. This use continues today as a one-mile stretch of picnic sites, two comfort stations, and many parking spaces provide visitors with ample area for dining outdoors. To a lesser extent, visitors use this area for hiking, as the recreation area's trail system is accessible here.

The Gas Station continued to provide gasoline, supplies, and services until 1978, at which time the NPS converted the service station into the Rocky Knob Visitor Information Station. The NPS staffs the information station seasonally. The information station is the only location within the recreation area that provides information about Rocky Knob, trail maps, and souvenirs. The NPS removed the original gas pumps located on the stone median in front of the building, when they converted the Gas Station to a Visitor Information Station in 1978.

Though not an originally planned recreational use, a horseback riding concession was operated at this location at one time according to NPS staff. This use of the site was discontinued in the late 1950s or early 1960s according to NPS staff. Two wooden frame buildings likely associated with this use remain in the landscape. The NPS uses both of these buildings for storage today.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Picnia area (passive recreation)

CLI Feature ID: 179491

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas Station (utilitarian)

CLI Feature ID: 179487

Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Landscape Characteristic:

Vegetation

Historic Conditions: Species listed on the PLUMs for the Picnic Area include: Northern red oak (Quercus borealis / Quercus rubra), hickory (Carya spp.), chestnut oak (Quercus prinus) and tulip poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera). Those trees made up the canopy layer with a variety of flowering shrubs such as flame azalea (Rhododendron calendulaceum), mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia) and rosebay rhododendron (Rhododendron maximum) common throughout the understory.

A planting plan for the Gas Station dated November 1949 illustrates the proposed locations of several understory trees and shrubs at the Gas Station site as well as the existing trees to remain. The existing trees are labeled “R.O” which is assumed to refer to red oak (Quercus falcata / Quercus borealis). The proposed plant list includes the following species:
Catawba Rhododendron (Rhododendron catawbiense)
Rosebay Rhododendron (Rhododendron maximum)
Flame Azalea (Rhododendron calendulaceum)
Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida)

Existing Conditions: The majority of the Picnic Area is located in a shady, protected hardwood grove located adjacent to the Parkway. The observed species are consistent with the list of species included on the PLUMs for this area as listed above.

In addition to the prevailing woodland character of the Picnic Area, there is a large open area consisting of mown grass with specimen trees. This open field is located near the group picnic area, adjacent to the Picnic Pavilion. The locations of the specimen trees here are consistent with the locations shown on the PLUMs, however, many of the trees shown on the PLUMs no longer exist. The species of the remaining trees include black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia), ash (Fraxinus spp.), tulip poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera), and red oak (Quercus borealis / Quercus rubra).

Overall, the vegetation in the Picnic Area is in good condition, with a few of the specimen trees showing signs of decline.

The vegetation associated with the Gas Station consists primarily of mown turf with specimen trees and the occasional shrub planting. None of the original dogwoods remain in the landscape and only two small clusters of original rhododendrons are apparent today. In addition, a single red oak that predates the construction of the Gas Station exists in its original location slightly southwest of the service station. The remaining rhododendrons and the existing oak tree appear to be in good health, as does the rest of the landscape associated with the Gas Station.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Forest surrounding picnic area

CLI Feature ID: 179493

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Ornamental plantings by comfort station

CLI Feature ID: 179495

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Specimen trees near picnic pavilion

CLI Feature ID: 179497

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Open field near picnic pavilion

CLI Feature ID: 179499

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Specimen Red Oak west of gas station

CLI Feature ID: 179501

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Remnant ornamental plantings gas station

CLI Feature ID: 179503

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 8. Specimen trees in the lawn and view of the Parkway from picnic parking area (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.141)

Landscape Characteristic:
Circulation

Historic Conditions: The designers took great care to work with, and take advantage of, the existing topography when laying out the road system for the Picnic Area. An elegant turnaround and expanded parking area were added to the two loops in the early 1940s, near Comfort Station #9. This parking area provides 33 spaces in close proximity to one another, and facilitates the use of this location for group picnicking.

The original circulation design for the Gas Station allowed two vehicles to access the gas pumps simultaneously, one on each side of the curbed stone median that historically contained the gasoline pumps. On the side of the median nearest to the service station, an extension of the front building façade overhangs the travel lane protecting users and attendants from the elements.

The PLUMs show a sidewalk to be located along the southwestern parking bay in the large parking area behind the service station. It is not known if this sidewalk was ever built.

Existing Conditions: Vehicular circulation at the Picnic Area consists of two single-lane loop roads that wind through the site, creating a distorted figure eight pattern in plan view. In addition to the large parking area, both of the vehicular loops contain numerous parking slips that accommodate from one to six cars.

Narrow asphalt or dirt paths permit pedestrian access to Picnic Area amenities like comfort stations, drinking fountains and picnic sites. The one-mile, Picnic Loop Trail encircles the entire Picnic Area, providing an easy hike for visitors. The Picnic Loop Trail ties into both the Black Ridge and Rock Castle Gorge Trails, allowing users of the Picnic Area complete access to the entirety of the Rocky Knob trail system.

Automotive traffic enters the Gas Station site from the Parkway from two entrances. The original circulation is still present in the landscape today, but vehicular use is discouraged by strategically placed wooden planter boxes. A small parking lot located to the northeast of the Gas Station provides space for seven cars. Immediately after this parking lot, a fork in the entrance road occurs with one branch leading to the picnic area and the other continuing on to a larger parking lot. This additional parking area provides space for 28 cars in two opposing bays. The NPS built this lot to serve a coffee and sandwich shop planned for this site, but never constructed.

Mortared flagstone walks surround the Gas Station providing the primary pedestrian circulation route for most visitors.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Asphalt pedestrian circulation-1941

CLI Feature ID: 179505

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Asphalt vehicle circulation-1941

CLI Feature ID: 179507

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Entrance drive to gas station-1949

CLI Feature ID: 179509

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station landscape median-1949

CLI Feature ID: 179511

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: 2 gas station asphalt parking areas-1949

CLI Feature ID: 179513

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic:
Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions:

Comfort Station #9- Constructed by the ERA in 1941 for a total cost of $2,600, this building was one of the first comfort stations built along the Parkway. The regional, rustic aesthetic of early Parkway design character is evident in the materials, massing, and rooflines of this building. The materials used to construct this building include a stone foundation, vertical board siding, and paned wood frame windows.

Comfort Station #84- Built in 1956 along the second loop in the Picnic Area, Comfort Station #84 is a

departure from the other comfort station in the Picnic Area. Having adopted a more utilitarian design aesthetic, this building makes use of Post-Mission 66 materials such as concrete block, and takes on new detailing. The materials and rooflines reflect the architectural tastes of the 1950s and are typical of Mission 66 design along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Gas Station Building #82– Planning and design for the Gas Station at Rocky Knob began in 1936. The building went through several different conceptual iterations before the NPS chose and built the final design in 1949. The early concepts show the service station building combined with a coffee and sandwich shop, while later versions show the station and sandwich shop with separate footprints. The NPS eventually chose the separate footprint version and the gas station was built first along with circulation and parking for the coffee and sandwich shop. The coffee and sandwich shop building was never built. The NPS built the gas station in a simple, rustic vernacular that is in keeping with the general design aesthetic of early Parkway construction. The form of the building has much in common with the Pump House, which the CCC built eight years earlier. Both buildings contain a steeply pitched front gabled roof overhang, which extends outward from the core of the building to provide a covered area for visitors near the main entrance. The gas station is constructed of cinder block overlaid with vertical wood siding set on a masonry foundation. The rear of the building is intended to look like a later addition and features a shed roof with two smaller six-over-six windows. One side elevation contains a single original six-over-six window, while the other features a short breezeway that leads to the women's restroom. The breezeway, front entrance walk, and median are all finished in irregular flagstone lined with a rolled concrete curb. The front median historically contained two identical gas pumps.

Wooden Buildings– Two identical buildings remain possibly designed to serve a horseback riding concession that operated at this site until the late 1950s or early 1960s according to park staff. These rustic wooden frame structures may have functioned as either ticket booths or hay storage. One building is located to the north of the gas station near a small rock outcropping. The other is located in an area of woodland to the southeast of the larger parking lot. One of the buildings retains a Parkway building inventory number of 384. NPS Day Labor constructed this building in 1951, and a building file in the Parkway Archives notes the use of the building as, "Wood Storage Shed" in 1953. It is likely that the function of this building evolved over time.

Picnic Pavilion #964- The NPS constructed this 25 feet by 40 feet log building in 1977. Built in a rustic style that is in keeping with early Parkway design character, this building features exposed log construction set on a mortared stone foundation. The pavilion is nestled into the woodland edge at the northeastern corner of the Picnic Area's main parking lot and is accessible to pedestrians via a mortared stone walkway. A low retaining wall built of the same native stone used for the floor of the building and the walkway that leads to it; surrounds the pavilion on three sides. The open-air building is rectangular in plan, offers shelter from the weather, and provides adequate gathering space for large groups of picnickers. There are two metal grills provided adjacent to the building for visitor use and six picnic tables are dispersed throughout the building's interior. The tables are identical to the ones found in the Rocky Knob Campground, described earlier in this chapter. The two grills are catalog replacements set in front of the remains of two original stone grills that are integrated into the surrounding stone retaining wall.

Existing Conditions:

Comfort Station #9- The NPS replaced the original wood shake shingle roof with a Post-Mission 66 asphalt shingle roof and opened up the enclosed breezeways that lead to the restroom doors on either side of the building. Despite these Post-Mission 66 alterations, the building is in good condition and is an excellent example of early parkway construction based on vernacular architectural forms.

Comfort Station #84- This building retains its original doors and windows and the only exterior alteration is the addition of a thin layer of painted wood veneer applied to the exterior block walls. The building is in good condition. Rocky Knob Recreation Area contains no other comfort stations of this design. This type of comfort station is an important intermediate step in the evolution of comfort station design throughout the Parkway, acting as a bridge between the early rustic type and the later type found in the Rocky Knob Campground and elsewhere along the Parkway. A network of asphalt

paths provides access to this comfort station from nearby parking slips. A Post-Mission 66 drinking fountain is located nearby, along with a wooden trail system sign. In addition, an original rhododendron planting exists today and is visible in the historic photo.

Picnic Pavilion #964- The pavilion is in good condition. The retaining wall is in fair condition due to the damaged grills and some failed mortar joints. The mortared stone walkway leading to the pavilion is also in fair condition, due to failing mortar. An identical pavilion occurs at the Smart View Picnic Area, further south along the Parkway, suggesting that this pavilion structure was a Parkway standard at the time of its construction.

Gas Station Building #82- Asphalt shingles replaced the original cement roof shingles. An original stone chimney remains. The front façade features a central original door, with two original double hung six-over-six windows located on either side. The two identical gas pumps were both removed. NPS staff recently reset the flagstone walkways and they appear to be in good condition. The NPS altered and expanded the perimeter of the gas pump median in 1973 and it is no longer symmetrical in plan. Also, a flagstone path has been added to connect the parking area to the building entrance. Additionally, the small parking area located on the northeast side of the station was expanded at some point prior to 1966, resulting in the loss of an original planting bed in the process. These alterations are all visible in historic photos. The interior of the building contains many of its original features, including the service desk, restroom fixtures, wall treatments and concrete floor covered in linoleum designed to look like mortared slate. The building is good condition and the best example in Rocky Knob of post-war Parkway architecture that employed the use of Post-Mission 66 materials and construction techniques, while still being based on vernacular forms.

Wooden Buildings–The NPS currently uses both of the buildings for storage. Both are in poor condition. The building located near the parking area contains an original painted wood sign from the earliest days of the Parkway. Similar signs appear in historic photographs taken in the 1930s within Rocky Knob Recreation Area.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Picnic area comfort Station #9-1941

CLI Feature ID: 179515

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area comfort station #84-1955-56

CLI Feature ID: 179517

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic pavilion-1977

CLI Feature ID: 179519

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Gas station

CLI Feature ID: 179521

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station area 2 wooden buildings

CLI Feature ID: 179523

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 9. Comfort Station #9, 1952 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.141)

Figure 10. Comfort Station #9, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.141)

Figure 11. Comfort Station #84, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.142)

Figure 12. Picnic Pavilion, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.143)

Figure 13. Rocky Knob Gas Station, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.155)

Figure 14. Rocky Knob Gas Station, 1951 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.156)

Figure 15. Wooden Building, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.156)

Landscape Characteristic:
Small Scale Features

Historic Conditions: The landscape architects in the Roanoke office gave considerable thought to the design of small-scale features in the Picnic Area of Rocky Knob, as evidenced in the surviving plans and drawings. According to Firth, they were influenced by the rustic character illustrated in National Park Service manuals and, “guided by the precepts of simplicity and economy and rustic character” contained within them (Firth, 1993, 124). Many of these original elements still exist in the Picnic Area and are described in detail below, including grills, stone fireplaces, picnic tables, stone retaining wall, stone tree wells, drinking fountains, entrance gates, guardrail, stairs, stone curb, playground structures, signage, fencing, and litter deposit area. Although initial Picnic Area plans included preliminary drawings of the Gas Station, and it appears on the 1941 master plan, the NPS did not construct the Gas Station until 1949, including small scale features such as curbing, drinking fountain, signage, fire hydrant, planters, and drainage structure.

Grills- Original drawings for these grills show the method of construction. The grills consist of a small concrete slab set on a crushed stone base, surrounded by native boulders to give the appearance that the fireplace was carved out of the surrounding natural rock outcrops. Builders lined the concrete base with fireproof bricks coated in a special fire clay to eliminate cracking and failed mortar caused by multiple fires. The bricks also provided a rigid base upon which a trapezoidal metal grill surface could rest evenly. Doughton Park contains examples of similar, u-shaped stone grills, making them an early Parkway standard.

Picnic Tables- Historic photographs show wooden tables located in the Picnic Area. These tables were constructed of chestnut planks and logs (Firth, 1993, 124).

Stone Retaining Wall- ERA crews built a dry stack stone retaining wall along the return portion of the first loop in the Picnic Area, to the west of Comfort Station #9. This wall holds back a cut slope and is approximately 75 feet long. The wall varies in height from two to four feet, with the tallest portion located in the center and both end sections tapering back into grade, creating an organic, slightly

arching form. The wall is visible in a historic photograph dated 1938.

Stone Tree Wells- The Picnic Area contains three stone tree wells. Varying slightly in size and shape, each well was intended to retain soil around an existing tree. These tree wells do not appear on planning documents for the Picnic Area or on the PLUMs, but are presumably original due to their apparent age and their similarity to original stone tree wells located at Doughton Park. All three wells occur on the outer edge of the second vehicular loop of the Picnic Area, in the area that originally served as the recreation area's campground.

Drinking Fountains- An 'As Built' drawing dated 1962 shows that the Picnic Area had six drinking fountains originally. These drinking fountains were originally constructed of stone. Historically, there were no drinking fountains at the Gas Station.

Entrance Gates- The original Picnic Area gate likely consisted of a simple chain strung through two eyebolts. Research failed to uncover a photograph of the original gate; though a construction plan for the Picnic Area dated 1937 (Illustration 2.10), clearly shows the location of the gate between the two rock outcrops.

Guardrail- Historically, there were sections of wooden guardrail of a different type located throughout the Picnic Area. Plans from the late 1930s include construction details that illustrate how to build two different types of wooden rails for the varying conditions within the Picnic Area (Illustration 2.13). One version of the rail consisted of 8 inch rounded logs set on wooden posts, while the other type was a log curb set directly into a recently cut slope. Photographs from the 1930s show that log guardrail was installed in the Picnic Area; however, the exact locations could not be determined as no planning documents or construction drawings illustrate proposed or installed locations.

Stone Curb- Many of the vehicular loops and parking slips within the Picnic Area feature sections of native stone curbing. The downslope side of the driving surface is the most likely place to find this type of curb. An estimated fifty percent of the vehicular lanes and parking slips are lined with stone curb. The type of stone is, "Rocky Knob Black Stone", a type of slate used for curbing throughout the Virginia sections of the Parkway.

Remnant Playground Structures- By 1941, the NPS constructed playing fields, a playground with swings, horseshoe courts and seesaws in what is now a large open area adjacent to the Picnic Pavilion in the Picnic Area (Quin 1997, 214).

Drainage Structures- Drainage structures were built throughout the Picnic Area and typically consisted of a mortared stone headwall surrounding a concrete pipe. The stone used matches the type and color of stone used throughout the picnic area on nearby curbing, retaining walls, tree wells and steps.

Concrete Drainage Structure– The NPS constructed the grated metal drop inlet near the western Gas Station entrance in 1937. It is located in the grassed median, adjacent to the concrete milepost.

Signage- At the Picnic Area, a wooden trail system sign was located near Comfort Station #84. An identical sign was located near the entrance to the Campground. Installed in the 1940s, they were similar in character and construction to the gunboard signs found elsewhere on the Parkway, and featured a routed wood map of the Rocky Knob Recreation Area trail system.

A historic photograph shows a large sign located in the grassed median that separates the Gas Station from the Parkway that contained a routed wood Blue Ridge Parkway logo panel suspended from a timber sign post that indicated the distance remaining to "Great Smokies Park" on a timber cross beam. A different historic photo from the same era shows a less elaborate sign along the Parkway that indicated the presence of the gas station ahead. The larger sign was one of the original mileposts that were located at the recreation areas along the Parkway in 1941 (Quin 1997, 139). The smaller "gas" sign dates from the same year.

Fences- The PLUMs show the fence type as snake rail, following the curve in the Parkway. Two

sections of fence extended into the Picnic Area, defining the woodland edge that surrounds the open grass area.

Curbs– Original rolled concrete curb surrounds the large grassed median, which separates the Gas Station from the Parkway. This type of curb is also located along the northern side of the picnic entrance road and the perimeter of the large parking area behind the Gas Station.

Fire Hydrant and Hose Reel– A fire hydrant and hose reel were added at the Gas Station in 1949.

Wooden Planters– The date of these Post-Mission 66 additions is unknown, but likely correlates to 1978 when the Gas Station was converted into a visitor information center.

Existing Conditions:

Grills- Three types of grills are present in the Picnic Area today, reflecting changes in replacement and maintenance practices over time. A few remaining original stone grills or fireplaces are sprinkled throughout the first vehicular loop in the area that comprised the historic Picnic Area. Approximately five of these grills exist today. Most are incomplete or in poor condition. The two other grill types in the Picnic Area are catalog items from either the Jamestown Advance Products Corporation or Pilot Rock. These metal replacements are in good condition overall, though some show obvious signs of age and oxidation.

Picnic Tables- Except for the six aluminum and wood picnic tables associated with the Picnic Pavilion, all of the picnic tables that remain at the site are constructed of concrete with either recycled plastic or wooden seats. Only one table was documented that still retains wooden seats, both of which had deteriorated severely. Recycled plastic bench seats are much more common, and while the material is sustainable, it does not work well in this application. The distance spanned by the seats is simply too great and as a result the plastic seats sag dramatically in the middle. In addition to sagging, the recycled plastic boards are not as thick as the original wooden boards were, altering the proportions of the original design. The tables vary in condition from fair to poor. The concrete tabletops are broken in some cases and the concrete seat supports have often settled or suffered from erosion at their bases. These tables are not original to the Picnic Area as historic photographs show wooden tables located here. The current tables are likely 1950s or 1960s replacements, as they are identical to picnic tables found in Julian Price Memorial Park built during that period.

Stone Retaining Wall- The stone retaining wall has not changed considerably to date. The addition of asphalt paving has raised the height of the drive lane, thus reducing the current wall height a few inches, but despite this minor alteration, the wall remains in good condition.

Stone Tree Wells- Two of the three tree wells still contain specimen trees of considerable size that are likely the original trees dating to the late 1930s. The third well no longer surrounds a tree and instead functions as a small retaining wall. All three of the tree wells are in good condition.

Drinking Fountains- Three drinking fountains are located within the Picnic Area today. Two of these are Post-Mission 66 replacement fixtures, while one historic stone drinking fountain remains intact. Situated in the open grass area, near the group picnic pavilion is the historic stone fountain. It is in fair condition overall, as many of the mortar joints have been reset sloppily over the years and the drain for the lower spigot has been replaced. The original design of these fountains did not take into account the eventual need for repairs on the internal plumbing system, as there is no way to access the internal components once constructed. Because of this oversight, drinking fountains of this type are difficult to maintain or repair without partial or full disassembly. This fountain is identical to the other three second-generation Parkway drinking fountains that remain in the Rocky Knob Campground. The other two fountains at the Picnic Area are Post-Mission 66 replacements for original stone fountains. These two Post-Mission 66 fountains are in the same approximate location as the originals and are in good condition. In addition to the three functioning fountains, there is evidence of a fourth stone drinking fountain in the form of a stone base, located in the woods located in the woods near Comfort Station #9.

A Post-Mission 66 stone drinking fountain, installed circa 2009, is located within the flagstone path that connects the Gas Station entrance with the adjacent parking area. This fountain is similar in construction, style, and material to the original stone drinking fountains that still exist in both the Rocky Knob Camping and Picnic Areas; however, it lacks the refinement and proportions of the originals. The fountain is functional and in good condition. Historically, there was no drinking fountain at this location.

Entrance Gates- There are two entrance gates located at the Rocky Knob Picnic Area. Both are Parkway standard entrance gates constructed of solid wood timbers painted dark grey, with painted steel structural elements that provide support and allow the gate to open and close. The two gates feature routed wood signs that read, “Closed” in standard Parkway lettering. Both of the gates are in good condition and do not show signs of rot or decay. They are identical to the gates found at the Rocky Knob Campground and at other recreation areas throughout the Parkway. It is worth mentioning that the wooden gates found today are not the original type of entrance gate used at the Picnic Area. Two remnant metal eyebolts embedded into rock outcroppings on either side of the entrance to Picnic Area are all that remain of the original gate system today. The bolts are in good condition today.

Guardrail- Two sections of Post-Mission 66 guardrail exist within the Picnic Area. This rail consists of large square timbers set atop precast concrete blocks. The timbers are secured with metal bolts that pass through an interesting saw cut joint before attaching to the concrete blocks. The condition of these guardrails is generally good, although there are a few places where the timbers have detached from their concrete bases.

Stone Steps- Many sets of stone steps are located throughout the trail system that serves the Picnic Area. The steps vary in construction and size from simple stones set into the earth consisting of only a few treads, to longer, more complex runs of stone that feature intricate stone cheek walls. The steps vary in condition from good to poor. Stones have come loose and need resetting in places and some treads have settled to the point of being useless.

Stone Curb- The condition of the stone curb in the Picnic Area varies from good to poor, with some sections needing to be reset.

Pink granite curb lines the smaller parking area at the Gas Station and was likely added when this parking area was expanded.

Remnant Playground Structures- Little remains of this use in the landscape today except for some concrete footings visible in the open fields, presumably associated with these recreational structures.

Drainage Structures- Original stone culverts and headwalls exist throughout the Picnic Area. These original features vary in condition from good to poor. One of the headwall capstones needs resetting, and most of the pipes are in need of cleaning and debris removal.

Concrete Drainage Structure– This original feature near the Gas Station is in good condition and is a contributing feature.

Signage- The wooden trail system signs in the Picnic Area are in good condition and show no signs of rot or decay.

A wooden signboard is located near the entrance to the Picnic Area that encourages visitors to clean up after themselves in the Picnic Area. A wooden box containing litterbags is mounted to the sign, and visitors are invited to take a bag for use while picnicking. This sign is Post-Mission 66 and in good condition.

Other signs in the area deal with issues such as picnic area policies, picnic site locations, and directions to facilities. Typically, reflective metal signs serve to direct vehicular traffic around the one-way loops and smaller wooden and/or recycled plastic signs provide information to pedestrians about

the trail routes that pass through this area. These smaller wooden and/or recycled plastic signs feature recessed lettering and the standard Parkway font, typical of this type of signage throughout the Parkway.

Neither of the original signs exist at the Gas Station today. Reflective metal traffic and directional signs are located adjacent to the Gas Station. These Post-Mission 66 signs direct users to the picnic area and the Parkway. In addition, a concrete milepost is located in the grass median adjacent to the Parkway. Mileposts are discussed in detail in the Parkway component landscape section later in this chapter. A Post-Mission 66 recycled plastic sign, mounted on wooden posts is located in the grassed median that separates the Gas Station from the Parkway. This sign directs users to the Rocky Knob Information Station, which refers to the gas station building's current use. This signboard is made to look like earlier routed wood signs, sharing the same font and color palate employed previously.

Litter Deposit Areas- There are two locations within the Picnic Area for visitors to dispose of their refuse and recycling. The construction date of both litter deposit areas is unknown. Positioned between the entrance and exit gates to the Picnic Area, the first litter deposit area consists of a three-sided wooden fence surrounding a metal dumpster with a bear-proof metal container for recyclables. The fence and its pickets slope with the topography, helping the structure blend into the landscape. The fence is unpainted and in good condition. An identical litter deposit area is located at the intersection of the two vehicular loops. The fence that surrounds this area also responds to the surrounding grade, making this detail character defining.

Fences- No fences are located within the Picnic Area, however, an attractive expanse of post and rail fence is visible from the group picnic area. This section of fence follows a sweeping curve in the Parkway and serves to enhance both the view of the Parkway from the Picnic Area and the view of the Picnic Area from the Parkway. The PLUMS show this fencing as a different type and configuration than what exists today. The PLUMs also show two sections of fence extend into the Picnic Area, defining the woodland edge that surrounds the open grass area. These two sections of fence were removed by 1966, as aerial photographs from that year show the fence in the same location that exists today. The current fence is in fair condition, with some leaning posts and damaged rails.

Fire Hydrant and Hose Reel– A fire hydrant and hose reel is located in the grassy area behind the Gas Station. Both of these items are in good condition.

Wooden Planters– Painted wooden planter boxes currently surround the entrance to the Gas Station. These Post-Mission 66 additions are painted to match the existing building and are used to prevent motorcycles and other vehicles from parking in the drive lane that travels beneath the building overhang. These planters are in good condition.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: Gas station original concrete curb-1949

CLI Feature ID: 179537

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station pink granite curb-post 1966

CLI Feature ID: 179539

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Rocky Knob Black Stone slate curb – 1937

CLI Feature ID: 179541

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station stone drinking fountain-2009

CLI Feature ID: 179543

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: 2 Metal replacement drinking fountains

CLI Feature ID: 179545

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: 1 Stone drinking fountain - Picnic Area

CLI Feature ID: 179547

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: 2 wood trail signs by picnic area - 1940

CLI Feature ID: 179549

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station Concrete milepost sign

CLI Feature ID: 179551

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station information station sign

CLI Feature ID: 179553

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Gas station fire hydrant and hose reel

CLI Feature ID: 179555

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Gas station wooden planets

CLI Feature ID: 179557

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Gas station concrete drainage structure

CLI Feature ID: 179559

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area 2 litter deposit areas-ND

CLI Feature ID: 179561

Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Feature Name: Picnic area post and rail fencing

CLI Feature ID: 179563

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area stone steps - 1941

CLI Feature ID: 179565

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area guardrail-Post Mission 66

CLI Feature ID: 179567

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area 2 entrance gates - 1940s

CLI Feature ID: 179569

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area 3 stone tree wells-1937

CLI Feature ID: 179571

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area stone retaining wall-1937

CLI Feature ID: 179573

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area picnic tables-1950s

CLI Feature ID: 179575

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area metal replacement grills

CLI Feature ID: 179577

Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature Name: Picnic area 5 stone fireplace/grill-1941

CLI Feature ID: 179579

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

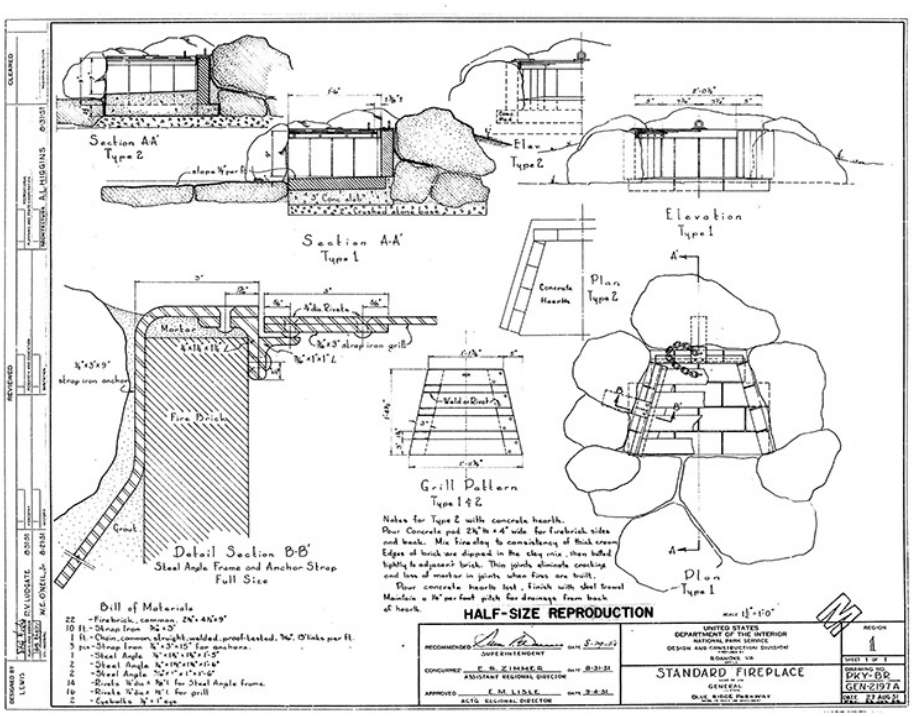


Figure 16. Plans for Parkway standard fireplace or grill, 1951 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.145)

Figure 17. Stone grill or fireplace at Rocky Knob Picnic Area, 1938 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.156)

Figure 18. Picnic table with sagging seat slats and exposed footings (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.146)

Figure 19. Stone tree well in the Picnic Area (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.146)

Figure 20. Stone drinking fountain in the Picnic Area (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.147)

Figure 21. Picnic Area gates (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.148)

Figure 22. Remnant eyebolts embedded into rock outcrops at the Picnic Area entrance (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.148)

Figure 23. Typical guardrail at Picnic Area (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.148)

Figure 24. Log guardrail in the Picnic Area, 1938 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.149)

Figure 25. Stone steps in the Picnic Area (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.150)

Figure 26. Stone steps in Picnic Area, 1938 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.149)

Figure 27. Stone curb in Picnic Area, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.150)

Figure 28. Typical drainage structure in the Picnic Area, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.150)

Figure 29. Post and rail fence along Parkway at the Picnic Area, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.152)

Figure 30. Concrete curb near Gas Station, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.156)

Figure 31. Hose reel and fire hydrant at Gas Station, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.157)

Figure 32. Wooden planters near Gas Station, 2011 (2014 Rocky Knob Recreation Area Cultural Landscape Report, p.158)

Landscape Characteristic:
Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions: The PLUMs do not indicate any planned views or vistas for the Picnic Area. The view from the parking lot adjacent to the Picnic Pavilion, however, contains a large mown field in the foreground with a post and rail fence line following a dramatic curve in the Parkway in the distance. Beyond the Parkway, NPS staff maintains a planned vista at the Rock Castle Gorge Overlook, adding to the openness of the scene from the parking area.

The PLUMS show a planned view for the area immediately across the Parkway from the Gas Station of the surrounding countryside to the southeast.

Existing Conditions: The view from the parking lot adjacent to the Picnic Pavilion remains visible.

NPS staff actively maintain the planned view at the Gas Station.

Character-defining Features:

Feature Name: View that appears on PLUMS gas station

CLI Feature ID: 179581

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature Name: View from parking by picnic pavilion

CLI Feature ID: 179583

Feature Contribution: Contributing

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 6

Next Assessment Due Date: 09/07/2023

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/07/2017

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Stabilization Measures:

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Exposure to Elements

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Operations On Site

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Removal/Replacement

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Structural Deterioration

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Description:

Type of Impact: Visitation

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Description:

Stabilization Costs

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Preservation

Approved Treatment Document: Cultural Landscape Report

Document Date: 2014-04-01

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

Preservation and rehabilitation are the primary treatment recommendations to guide long-term management of the cultural landscape at Rocky Knob. As funding becomes available the recommendations should be considered to facilitate the preservation and rehabilitation of the cultural landscape thus ensuring the integrity of the resources as per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes and Director's Order No. 28: Cultural Resource Management Guidelines. The preferred treatment for Rocky Knob Recreation Area is preservation to ensure that the cultural resources remain intact and the visitor experience remains uncompromised. While preservation is the overarching treatment, exceptions have been made for the rehabilitation of specific resources to accommodate current visitor use.

Approved Treatment Completed: No

Approved Treatment Costs

Landscape Approved Treatment Cost Explanatory Description:

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Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

Citation Title: See Rocky Knob Recreation Area parent landscape for a full list of references.

Year of Publication: