

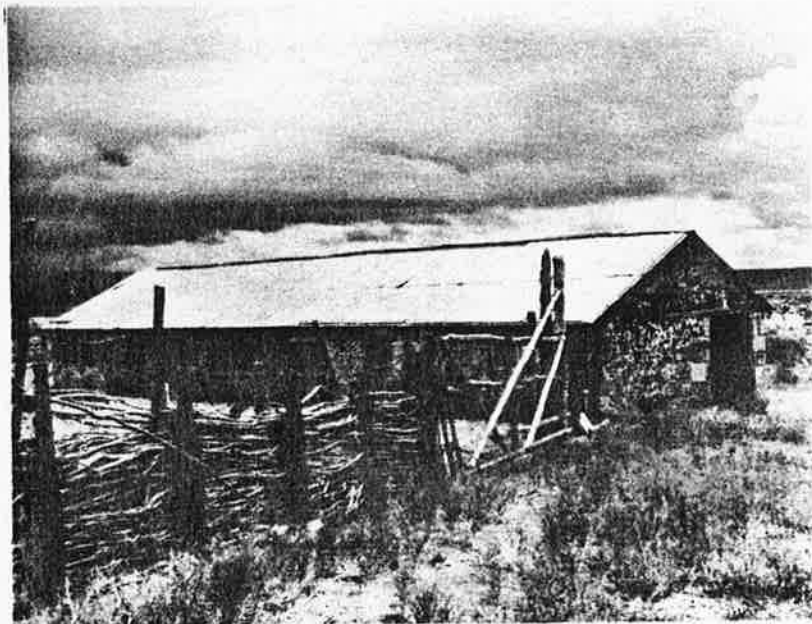


**CULTURAL
RESOURCE
INVENTORY:**

**Sheldon National
Wildlife Refuge**

**Hart Mountain National
Antelope Refuge**

**REGION ONE
U.S. FISH &
WILDLIFE SERVICE
February 1985**



CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY:
HART MOUNTAIN NATIONAL ANTELOPE REFUGE
SHELDON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Region 1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Portland, Oregon

February 1985

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Marge Stephen, Buzz Miller, and all the others whose love of this immense land and its history has helped preserve a bit of it for all of us.

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an intensive survey and inventory of eight historic resources located on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Its primary purpose is to document and evaluate sites of historical and architectural interest in order to provide an information base to guide planning, development, interpretation, and maintenance activities, and to make preliminary recommendations for management of the resources. Each site was evaluated to determine its eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Field procedures and techniques included an examination of primary and secondary source materials, extensive interviews with people knowledgeable about the area, and on-site inspection of each site. The report has three major parts. A general overview provides a framework for the examination and evaluation of the sites. The following section is organized on a site-by-site basis and includes the following information for each resource: brief narrative of historical development; evaluation of historical/architectural significance; recommendations; and photographs with physical description of each building/structure. This section is designed so that different parts can be extracted to form separate management documents. The third section consists of a general overview of findings and general recommendations for management of the resources. A bibliography of the sources used is appended.

The historic sites documented in this report are extremely significant cultural resources, five of which are determined to be potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. These include the Last Chance Ranch, Gooch Camp horsetrap, McKenney (Kinney) Camp, Shirk Ranch, and Hart Mountain Headquarters. The attrition rate for sites of this type is high. Several of the resources have been severely damaged over the years. Action to protect and stabilize the sites from further deterioration should be taken immediately. Finally, several of the resources have interpretive potential and should be given consideration in development of an interpretive program.

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a survey and inventory of eight historic sites located on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in south-central Oregon and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Nevada. It was prepared by the staff historian in the Portland Regional Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during fiscal year 1984.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required by federal law to identify and evaluate cultural resources on public land under its jurisdiction, and to ensure that agency-authorized and agency-initiated actions do not inadvertently harm or destroy cultural resources. Although these requirements can lead to complicated and time-consuming compliance processes, they serve to protect and conserve the nation's rapidly vanishing and non-renewable cultural resources. Federal laws mandating these requirements include the Antiquities Act of 1906, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and Executive Order 11593 (1971). This report represents a significant step by the Sheldon Hart Mountain Refuge Complex in the implementation of these directives.

The purpose of the investigation is to document the physical characteristics and condition, and historic and architectural significance of each resource based on criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and to provide preliminary recommendations regarding their management. NRHP criteria are as follows:

districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of state and local importance that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- 1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- 2) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- 3) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; or
- 4) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (36 CFR 800.10 (a))

The District supervisor and Refuge staff determined which resources were included in the study. Criteria for selection was based on:

- 1) degree of deterioration and need for stabilization/restoration;
- 2) association with events and/or people important in the history of the area; and
- 3) local community interest.

The following resources were investigated:

SHELDON

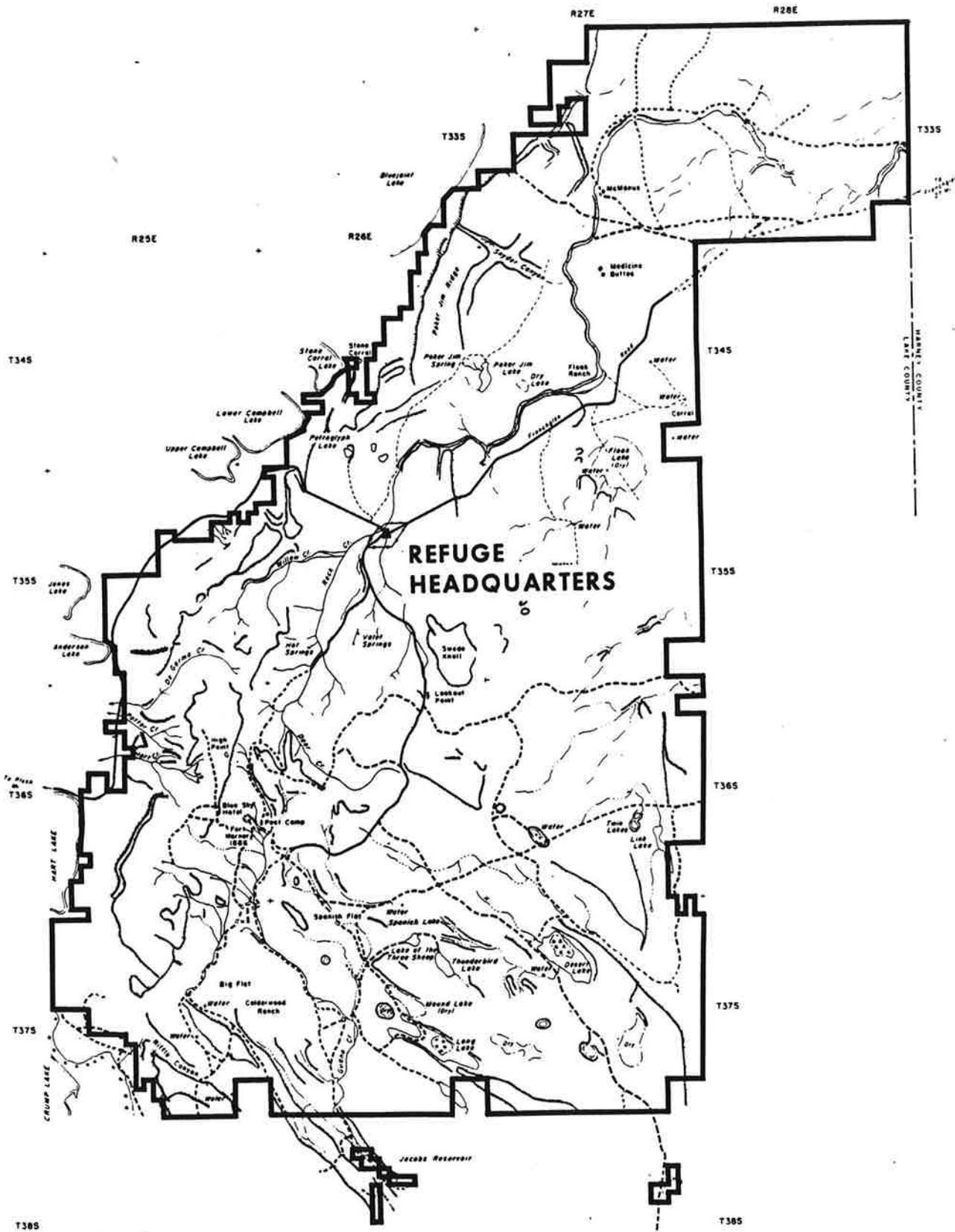
IXL Ranch
 Last Chance Ranch
 Gooch Camp
 Dufurrena Ranch
 Kinney Camp
 Thousand Creek Ranch

HART MOUNTAIN

Headquarters
 Shirk Ranch

The report consists of three major parts. A general overview of the area's history provides a framework for the examination and evaluation of the resources. It is based on major themes, identified during research, as being of particular importance in the historical development of the area. The second section is organized on a site-by-site basis and includes the following information for each: brief narrative of historical development; evaluation of historic/architectural significance; recommendations, and photographs and physical descriptions of each building/structure. This section is designed so that different parts can be extracted to form separate management documents.

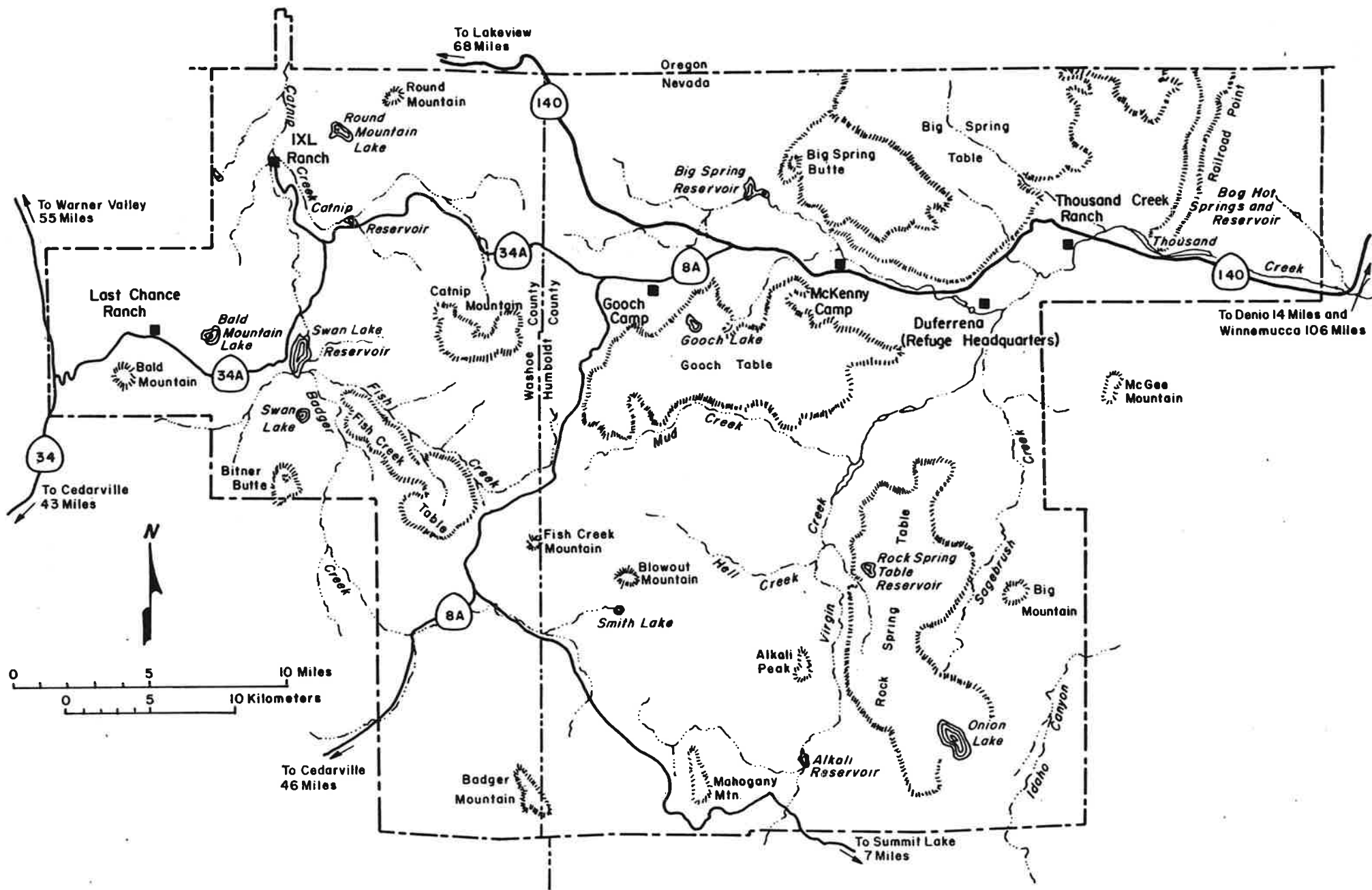
The third section consists of a synthesis of the findings and general recommendations. A comprehensive bibliography of sources consulted is appended which should prove useful to future investigations of historic cultural resources on the refuges.



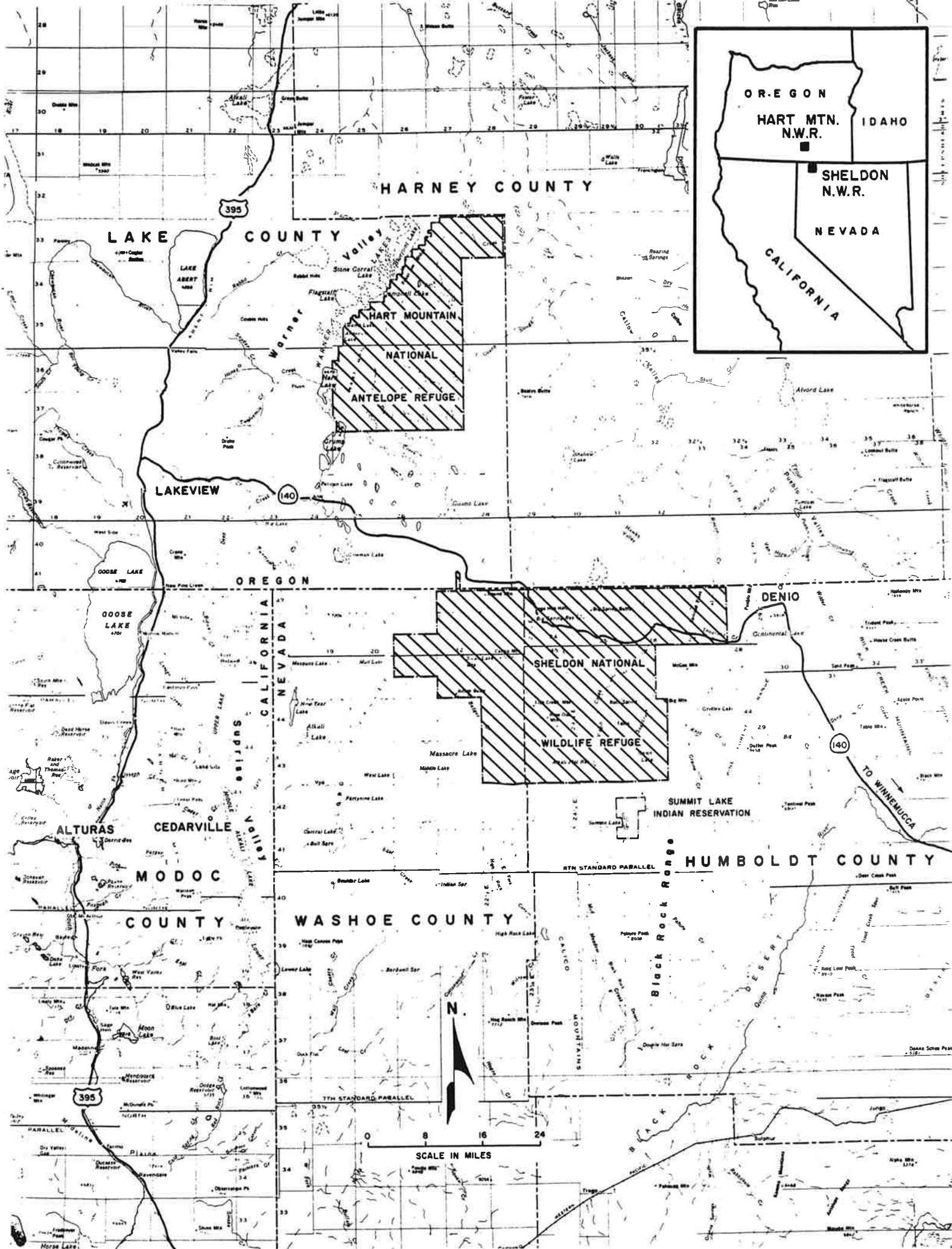
R25E **HART MOUNTAIN**
NATIONAL ANTELOPE REFUGE
 LAKE COUNTY, OREGON

SHIRK RANCH





SHELDON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



HARNEY COUNTY

LAKE COUNTY

HART MOUNTAIN
NATIONAL
ANTELOPE REFUGE

LAKEVIEW

OREGON

CALIFORNIA
NEVADA

SHELDON NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE

DENIO

SUMMIT LAKE
INDIAN RESERVATION

ALTURAS CEDARVILLE

MODOC COUNTY

WASHOE COUNTY

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

N

SCALE IN MILES

BLACK ROCK RANGE

CASCADE MOUNTAINS

7TH STANDARD PARALLEL

8TH STANDARD PARALLEL

9TH STANDARD PARALLEL

10TH STANDARD PARALLEL

11TH STANDARD PARALLEL

12TH STANDARD PARALLEL

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THE STUDY AREA

Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge are administered jointly out of the complex office in Lakeview, Oregon. Hart Mountain Refuge is located in south-central Oregon about 35 miles northwest of Sheldon Refuge, the northern boundary of which is the Oregon/Nevada state line. The boundaries of Hart Mountain Refuge encompass an area of approximately 275,000 acres located in Lake County. Sheldon Refuge, located in northwestern Nevada, includes large portions of Washoe and Humboldt counties and encompasses about 575,000 acres. Scattered inholdings within the refuges' boundaries are primarily mining patents and ranches. The area in and around the refuges is a land of wide spaces, its small population concentrated in the communities of Adel, Plush, and Lakeview, Oregon; Denio, Nevada; and Cedarville, California. The major economic activity is the range livestock industry. Tourism is limited, but growing rapidly.

DESCRIPTION OF INVESTIGATION

The first phase of the investigation was the literature search which consisted of an examination of existing documentary and archival records and a trip to the refuges to conduct a preliminary inspection of the resources. The literature search began the last week in October 1983 and continued until January 20, 1984, consisting of 19 workdays. During this period visits were made to the University of Oregon Library in Eugene; the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and State Archives in Salem; and the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. During the last week of January a trip to Reno/Carson City was made to

consult the Nevada SHPO files; the Nevada Historical Society; and Washoe County tax records. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Also during this period informant contacts were made as well as a review of pertinent records at the Regional Office.

The project historian visited the refuges in early November to become familiar with the types of resources, their general condition, location, and geographic setting. At this time it was decided to proceed with the fieldwork in late November in the hope of beating the first snowfall. The weather did not conform and actual on-site examination of the resources was delayed until April.

The second phase of the project commenced April 13 and continued until July 11. During this period three trips were made to the refuge to conduct the field survey and informant interviews. Some additional research was also conducted at this time: refuge files were consulted as well as Humboldt County records in Winnemucca. Time required to travel long distances and inclement weather conditions which prohibited access to some sites increased time spent in the field.

Fieldwork consisted of a systematic examination of each structure and building, and preparation of a physical description which includes the following information:

- 1) building type
- 2) general dimensions
- 3) condition of resource
- 4) distinguishing features

All resources were measured and photographed.

Due to lack of documentary data for this area most information regarding specific sites was collected through oral interviews with descendants of the people who lived or worked on the ranches, as well as past and present refuge staff, and other residents in the community knowledgeable about the area. It required 18 workdays to complete the fieldwork.

The final phase of the project overlapped with the second phase. Beginning in June, data collected during the literature search and in the field was reviewed and organized. Preparation of the final document began July 16.

PREVIOUS HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE AREA

Professional historians have conducted little historical research of Hart Mountain or south-central Oregon in general. To date the most significant work from the perspective of cultural resource management has taken two forms. The first is The Cultural Resource Overview of the BLM Lakeview District, South-Central Oregon prepared by Rick Minor, Kathryn Anne Toepel and Stephen Dow Beckham for the Bureau of Land Management in 1979. The historical narrative component of this document is based primarily on documentary sources. It is organized thematically and provides a relatively detailed framework for placing resources in some historic perspective.

The second investigation, almost exclusively site-oriented, is The Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings for Lake County, compiled by Stephen Dow Beckham in 1976. The inventory provides good, though brief, data on specific sites and is a useful tool for determining the relative abundance

of historical resources and developing a typology for vernacular building types. Collectively these studies function adequately as a tool for aiding cultural resource identification and evaluation on Hart Mountain Refuge.

Historical investigations on Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge are virtually non-existent with the exception of a brief historical narrative included in A Cultural Resource Overview for the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge prepared by Robert Elston and Phillip Earl in 1979. Here some attempt is made to provide the thematic background necessary for identifying potential historic resources on the refuge. All research was documentary in nature. There was no field investigation. The principal shortcoming of this study is that it primarily assembles data with little attempt to evaluate or interpret them in order to understand the potential significance of a given resource. To date there have been no site-specific surveys to identify or record historic sites on the refuge. A comprehensive framework for identifying and evaluating historic cultural resources on Sheldon has not been developed.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Sheldon and Hart Mountain refuges lie in the western portion of the Great Basin, a region characterized by internal drainage systems, block faulted mountain ranges, and volcanic tablelands. The area receives little rainfall due to the barrier against Pacific storms formed by the Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada. In addition, the climate is characterized by low relative humidity, rapid evaporation, abundant sunshine, and extreme ranges in temperature.

The natural vegetation found on the refuges varies according to soil type, climate, elevation, and geography. The dominant vegetation community is shrub - grassland with sagebrush at lower levels and juniper and mountain mahogany occurring at higher elevations. Stands of willow are frequently present along waterways.

Limitations imposed by this harsh environment have had a major impact on the type of activities that have characterized the area's history since the mid-nineteenth century. The arid land covered mostly by sagebrush did not permit production of marketable foodstuffs but was sufficient for grazing. The range livestock industry which grew up in the area did not require much in the way of technology and was characterized by use of local resources. Ranches were almost always established at springs, or areas where streams flowed down from higher elevations. Natural meadows often existed near these water sources.

When they didn't, ranchers developed irrigation systems to grow native hay and later alfalfa. Until well into the twentieth century ranch buildings and accessory structures were constructed of local materials such as stone, juniper, willow, and sod. The history of land use and occupation on the refuges is best described as adaptation to the environment rather than manipulation or modification of it. Although the impact of this inhospitable environment has been softened by transportation and technological developments, it is still desert country, and its history is best understood within the context of that environment. This theme is an integral part of the narrative which follows.

THE SITES

The ranches inventoried in this project were established in the late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century. Developed for stock raising they had in common their location along transportation routes, as well as proximity to water and grazing necessary for ranching operations. For the most part, the buildings and associated structures are products of the local environment.

A variety of nationalities participated in the settlement and agricultural development of the area. Irish were represented by ranchers such as the Barry family - a descendent of whom still leases the Shirk Ranch. George Hapgood, who owned a large ranch near Calcutta Lake as well as the Last Chance Ranch on Sheldon, was of English descent. William Ebeling, the original owner of several of the ranches documented in this report, came from Germany. Tom Dufurrena, one of the largest property owners on Sheldon when the government bought it, was a Basque; one of the most frequently mentioned national groups,

which contributed significantly to the expansion of the area's sheep industry in the early twentieth century.

The ranches, regardless of location, age, ethnic origins of its owner, or type of livestock, generally consisted of one or more houses and an assortment of barns, sheds, corrals and miscellaneous outbuildings. If the operation was relatively large, there might be a bunkhouse. This shelter is called by different names depending on location and use including line camp, and bunkhouse. A bunkhouse is a small house on the home ranch that serves as permanent home for ranchhands. With one or more rooms, there is space for cooking, eating, sleeping, and storing horse gear and equipment. Temporary shelters, called line camps were placed strategically at long distances from the home ranch. Ranch hands bunked there for short periods while tending cattle. Line camp refers to both the building and the place and may consist of a canvas tent set on the ground or sturdily constructed stone buildings such as the one at Gooch Camp.

There are three predominant types of bunkhouses and/or line camps in northern Nevada and southeastern Oregon - two house types well known in other parts of North America, and one type introduced to the region by Alpine Italian Masons (Marshall 1981:41). All three types are found on Sheldon and Hart Mountain and documented in this report. The first type is a continuation of the house form known for hundreds of years in Europe, the single pen house. Built either square or rectangular, it is found all over the United States, constructed of various materials. This type was first built of sod by one of the earliest homesteaders in the study area, George Hapgood, and in stone and wood by later ranchers. Its primary features are its one-room square or rectangular shape with door in the long side and a gable roof.

The second type is a version of the single pen house but the house plan has been turned and the door placed in the gable end rather than in the long side. Bunkhouses of this type are usually frame. Both of the single pen forms are often divided into two small rooms inside, but the general rule calls for one open room. The Shirk Ranch has an excellent example of each type. Both are wood frame box construction called "single-wall construction" by people in the area. This framing technique uses no vertical bracing but depends instead on a strong wall of vertical boards made rigid by the roof system. Second and third layers of battens and horizontal boards were usually added. The first type is an end-opening structure with one room; the second is side-opening with two small rooms. Line camp cabins may be either of these two forms. The structure at Gooch Camp which serves as a line camp for the M-C Cattle Company, is a single pen house of the second type, but with a hip roof rather than gable, and two adjacent doors, each opening into a separate room.

The third type of bunkhouse is a one and one-half to two-story building constructed of stone, sometimes in combination with wood. It is a derivation of a building type common to northern Italy and brought to Nevada by Italian stone masons: several of these structures remain on ranches south of the study area near Winnemucca (Marshall 1981:41). The only fully intact example found in the study area is at Kinney Camp. The first floor is partly underground and was used as a cellar or meat room. The buckaroos and ranch hands lived in the second story, reached by an outdoor staircase. The building is roughly square with thick rock walls to the second floor line with wood above, and hip roof. Bunkhouses of this type are known to have existed at Dufurrena as well as Thousand Creek Ranch (Stephens 1984).

All of the ranches had a barn although large barns were uncommon. A notable exception is the long barn at Shirk Ranch. Other ranch structures included chicken houses, sheds for machinery, wagons, and other equipment, and on large operations, a blacksmith shop.

Most of the ranches had less than eight functional buildings, although it is not uncommon to find ranches in the area with more. Generally speaking, a large number of buildings, many in stages of disrepair and disuse, reflects a long history of occupation where new structures were erected as needed and the other buildings gradually abandoned. Both the Shirk and IXL ranches are noteworthy in this respect. Initially established in the 1880's and in continual operation as working ranches since that time they reflect a continuum of ranching history from early settlement of the area to the present.

Materials used in construction of ranch buildings and structures had in common their ready accessibility and low cost. In a region of long distances and fairly primitive transportation, the cost of manufactured building materials, such as milled lumber or brick, tended to be prohibitive. Barbed-wire was also expensive at first; and when used was often to enclose large areas of ground such as pasture, while juniper stakes and willow branches were commonly used for the ranches' corrals and pens.

Ranch houses and auxiliary buildings tended to have a long, low rectangular shape with a shallow-pitched gable or shed roof. Most of the residences and animal sheds have entrances in the long side, while the barn entrance was almost always in the gable end. Wall materials were generally rough, although window and door openings were often framed with milled lumber. Roofs were