

Determination of Eligibility
Dan Moller Cabin, JUN-00927

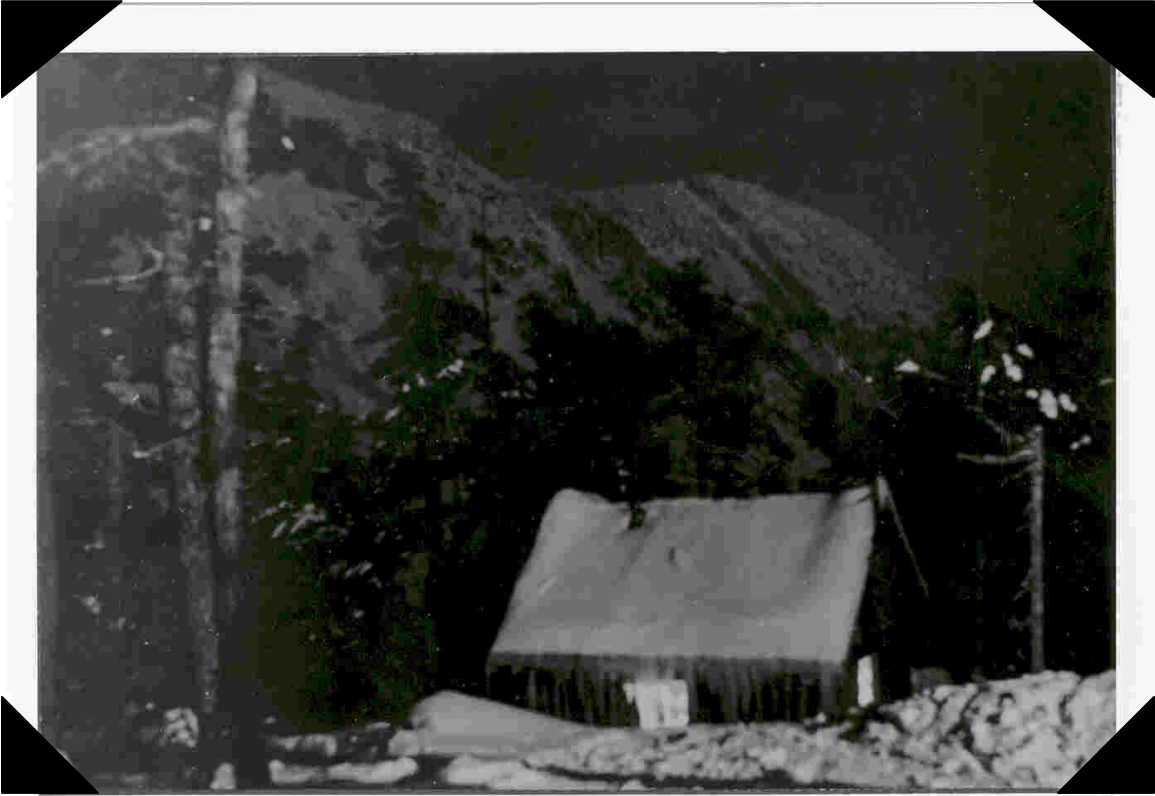
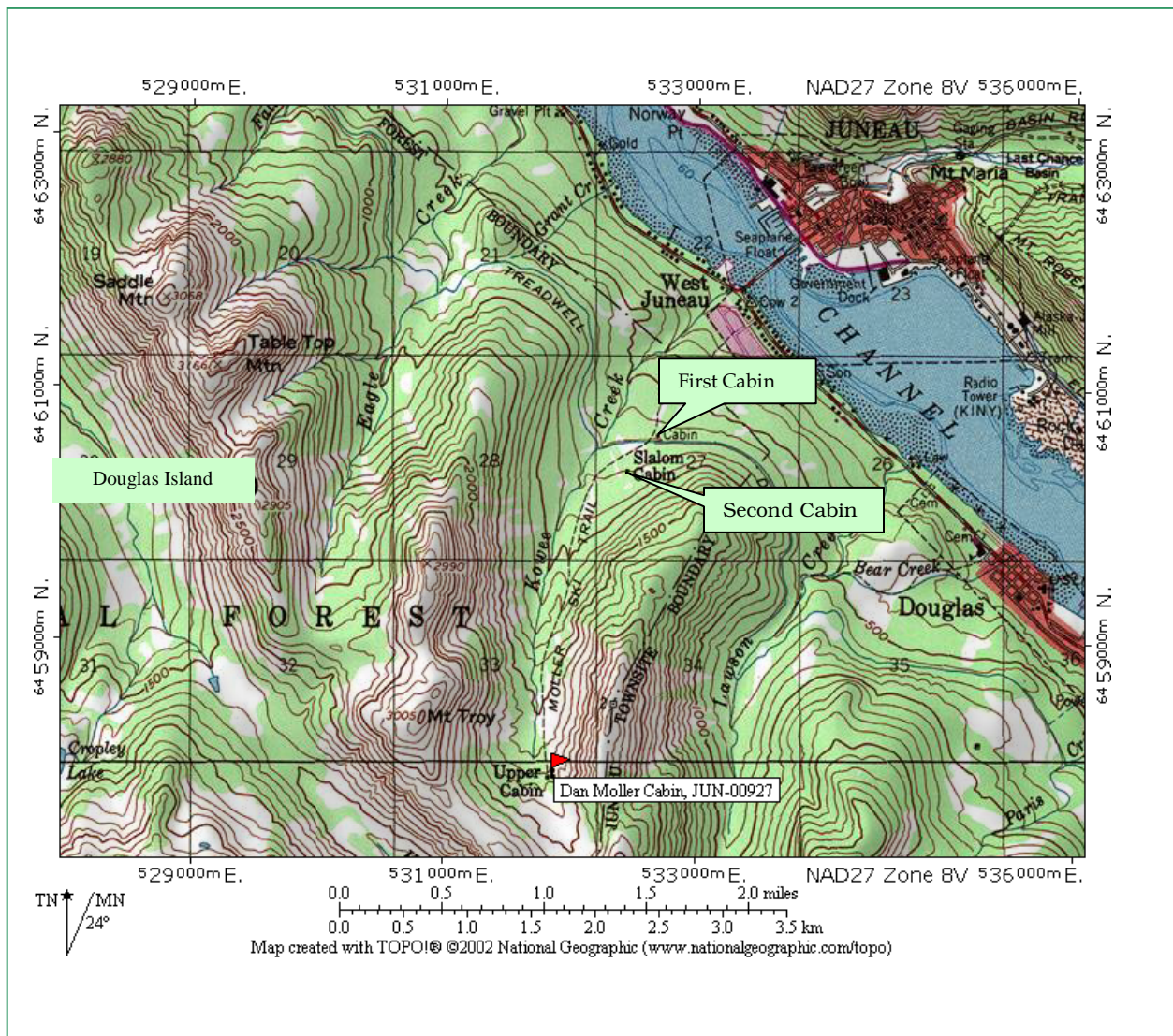


Photo Courtesy Alaska State Library Joe Werner, Collector PCA 3-1-162

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Tongass National Forest
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The Dan Moller Cabin is located on Douglas Island, approximately 3 miles southwest of Juneau. The cabin is in the vicinity of the Douglas Ski Bowl, a popular ski area for local residents, especially prior to the opening of Eaglecrest Ski Area in 1975. Located at approximately 1800 feet above sea level, access to the cabin is by hiking on a trail, portions of which consists of planks over muskeg, or snowmobile during the winter months. Two trailheads are available, one is on Pioneer Street and the other is located at the end of Jackson Street, both on Douglas Island. The cabin is within the NW ¼ of Section 4, Township 41 South, Range 67 East, Copper River Meridian and is depicted on JUN B-2 (Figure1).

Figure 1: Dan Moller Cabin (JUN-00927) Site Location



Dan Moller Cabin

The Dan Moller cabin is currently used as a public use recreation cabin, administered by the USDA Forest Service. It is a 16' X 18' cabin constructed of native peeled vertical logs with log truss rafters forming a 45 degree pitched roof. The steep roof and trusses allow for a sleeping loft platform above the main floor. The current condition of the cabin is such that it requires extensive rehabilitation or replacement.

On December 30, 1935 the *Daily Alaska Empire*, reports the Forest Service had given the Juneau Ski Club exclusive use of the skiers' cabin at the head of the Douglas Ski Trail. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the cabin the week prior to December 30, 1935 according to the newspaper article. Known as "Third Cabin" and "Upper Cabin", due to the presence of two cabins at lower elevations, it originally served as a warming cabin for the Ski Club operation in the Douglas Ski Bowl.

The cabin and trail leading to the cabin are named for Dan Moller, a crew supervisor who was in charge of the construction of the trail in the 1930's. In 1935 (Daily Alaska Empire) Dan Moller was the general Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) foreman for the U.S. Forest Service.

The cabin suffered from vandalism and lack of maintenance. By 1983 it was in very poor shape, its windows knocked out and heavy graffiti carved into its walls and its logs badly deteriorated. A rehabilitation of the cabin was completed as a cooperative effort by the Taku Conservation Society, the Juneau Ski Club and the Vietnam Veterans of America (see figure 4). Donated untreated 12" X 12" timbers were used which did not last for very long. Windows were replaced with plexiglass and the original shake roof was replaced with a metal one.

In 1990 a covered deck and woodshed were added to the north façade of the cabin. This corrected a design flaw that allowed the heavy snow load to fall from the roof to the north and south, with the front door of the cabin being on the north façade. A woodshed was also added onto the west side of the structure.

In 1999 another restoration was undertaken with the cabin supported by jacks and the wall foundation and part of the floor replaced with new materials. A new concrete pier foundation was constructed, rotten sill beams were replaced with treated beams, the cabin was insulated and trail improvement work was completed.

Figure 2: PCA 3 - 1-116 Joe Werner Collection



Dan Moller Cabin (photos undated). Photos courtesy of the Alaska State Library from Joe Werner's albums consisting of 166 photographs of the Juneau Ski Club Activities



Figure 3: PCA 3 - 1-163 Joe Werner Collection

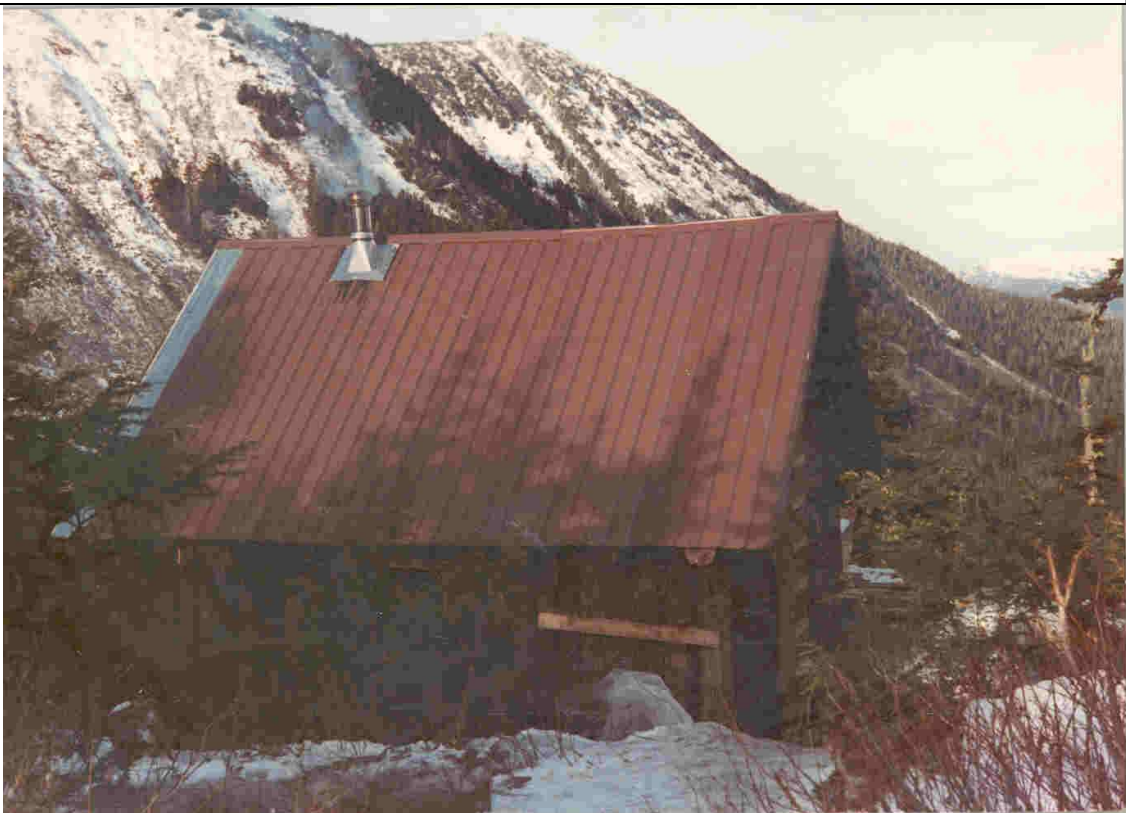


Figure 4: Dan Moller Cabin prior to rehabilitation in 1983. Note the absence of glass in windows. At this time there was no porch or woodshed and the original shake roof is in place



Figure 5: Photos taken in 1983 before cabin restoration

Figure 6: Photo taken after cabin restoration in 1983



Ski Club History

According to Bob Janes, Ski Club Historian, the Juneau Ski Club evolved from the Juneau Hiking Club. In the early 1930's the Hiking Club scheduled trips every Sunday and participants included a few married couples, unmarried women, many of whom were schoolteachers, and a few bachelors. The club was most active from September to May as many of schoolteachers were not resident during the summer months. In the winter of 1932-33 the club members started skiing on some of the trips, especially in the Gold Creek Basin. A small portable tow with 1000 feet of quarter inch rope had been installed on the Upper Perseverance Tail area on Alexander (Sandy) Smith's mining claim there. The Juneau Ski Club was formed in 1935 with Sandy Smith as its first president.

The Chamber of Commerce of both Juneau and Douglas requested that the Forest Service construct a ski run on Douglas Island, according to the *Daily Alaska Empire* (November 9, 1934). The Forest Service agreed to the construction which was scheduled to begin in the fall of 1934 or the spring of 1935. The Douglas Bridge opened in 1935 and allowed easy access to the newly constructed trail. The small portable ski tow operated between 1st and 2nd meadow, about 1.5 miles up the trail. The Forest Service oversaw construction of two shelters named first and second cabins. First cabin was north of (below) the Treadwell Ditch at approximately 640 feet in elevation while the second cabin, named Slalom Cabin, was south of the Treadwell Ditch at approximately 860 feet in elevation. Neither of these two cabins is currently standing.

By December 30, 1935 the *Daily Alaska Empire*, reports the Forest Service has given the Juneau Ski Club exclusive use of the skiers' cabin at the head of the Douglas Ski Trail. A fee of 50 cents for overnight and 25 cents for day use was to be charged. It was hoped that the private control of the public facility would result in better maintenance. The article notes that CCC workers built the cabin. The Juneau Ski Club was very active with day skiing and overnight trips featuring night skiing as well.

By February 1936 the Juneau Ski Club has organized the Downhill Tournament. The course was reported as three and one half miles and attended by a crowd of "nearly one half a thousand" in 1937 (*Daily Alaska Empire*, 1937). Dan Moller took third place in the race with the Moller trophy for first place going to Halvor Opsol of Petersburg for a time of 9 minutes and 37 seconds. The CCC also constructed a ski jump at "Jump Hill" near the head of present day Cordova Street. The *Daily Alaska Empire* also reported the results of the ski jumping contest held on the newly completed hill near the finish line (February 22, 1937).

The Daily Alaska Empire (November 28, 1939) reported that the CCC crew began work on a ski tow on Douglas Trail. The tow was reported as being built for the Juneau Ski Club, which planned to charge a small fee for its use. In 1939 Darryl Crooks, a skier on the American Olympic Team in Garmisch in 1936, laid out what is called the Crooks Trail, above Second Meadow.

Several tow ropes transported skiers up to the First and Second Meadow where the shelters were. The first towrope was purchased from the New Sweden Ice Machine

Company in Seattle and installed in 1939. This tow was reported as “completely portable, mounted on its own toboggan, it weighs slightly more than 350 pounds”(Alaska Daily Empire, 1939). 1000 feet of rope was looped around a drum and skiers could catch a ride lasting one-minute for transportation 500 feet upslope. This rope tow operated with a four and one half horsepower gasoline engine at six miles per hour with as many as five people hanging on to the line. The promoters charged 10 cents per ride or fifteen rides for a dollar (Alaska Daily Empire, 1939).

The second towrope, more robust than the first, was purchased in Seward for \$50.00. It was powered by a 1945 Dodge truck engine and was set up in the vicinity of the second cabin.

In the early 1950's, Dean Williams and Judge Tom Stewart were instrumental in the purchase of a Tucker Snow Cat from Medford Oregon for \$10,000. The tracked vehicle with a sled could carry as many as 40 –50 skiers and was christened “*Oola*” the *Juneau Ski Train*. By the early 1950's a commercial rope tow operated under the name KAW-WAH-EE Ski Company in addition to the Ski Club rope tow, now moved from Second Cabin to the Douglas Ski Bowl, just beyond the Dan Moller Cabin. A warming hut was also built by the Ski Club and called 3rd Cabin.

“Oola” lasted about ten years and was followed by a commercial venture started by Ink Ingledue. In 1970 the Ski Club purchased a Snow Master Snow Cat and operated it until Eaglecrest opened in the winter of 1975-76. Options expanded when skiers could access the Douglas Ski Bowl by snowcat for two dollars or helicopter for five dollars. In the late 1960s Bob Janes and Craig Lindh, with the Forest Service were charged with the task of surveying suitable sites for a commercial ski operation. The Forest Service prospectus for private development drew no responses, due to lack of motorized access. However, in 1971 a congressional appropriation was matched by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation resulting in the construction of a road in the Fish Creek Drainage. In 1974 Juneau sales tax was increased by 1% to pay for construction of a ski area.

The Juneau Ski Club, organized in 1935, continues to be in existence as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The Civilian Conservation Corps developed out of the Great Depression and the “New Deal” as a way to economic recovery. Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected in November 1932 and inaugurated on March 1933, recommended a series of public works programs to ease under-employment during the Great Depression. Congress passed the law on March 31, 1933 creating the Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW) that directed the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The program was created to use local labor for rural conservation and forestry projects while providing unemployment relief by putting people to work preserving natural resources and promoting environmental conservation.

Throughout the 1930s various New Deal programs and agencies continued to provide funding and personnel for a wide variety of development projects with the result that

developments in the national, state, county, and municipal lands were carried forward with regular manpower and appropriations. The program is generally considered one of the most successful of the New Deal efforts.

In the Alaska Territory the program was administered differently than it was in the other states, where the Department of Labor did the recruiting; the War Department handled the camp operation, education and payroll; and various resource agencies oversaw field activities. In Alaska, without the presence of a large War Department, the USDA Forest Service oversaw all field activities and took over the tasks of camp operation and education (Mobley, 1993). Nationwide the enrollment was open to young men from eighteen to twenty-three years of age. In Alaska the age requirements were dropped as were restriction on re-enrolling, however there was a one-year residency requirement. Enrollees were generally middle-aged and often employment was seasonal. Foremen were often local men, often loggers or Forest Service retirees (Rakestraw, 1994)

By the end of 1934 the Forest Service in Alaska employed 325 men through the CCC program, 130 of whom were assigned to the Admiralty Island Division based in Juneau. Two years later the enrollment had increased to 1,037 with 245 men in the Admiralty Island Division. CCC activities in Alaska included air strips, housing, fire and flood control, demolition, communications, sanitation, wells, cabins, trails, roads, bridges, shooting ranges, fences, floats and docks, dams, hatcheries, totem pole restoration, and archaeology. However, in the Admiralty Division the prime work was building recreational areas, including the shooting range and Skater's Cabin near Mendenhall Glacier, the Totem Pole at Auk Village and shelters and trails for the Admiralty Canoe Route (Rakestraw, 1994).

The CCC was a very visible Depression-era job program, employing thousands across the nation. Natives in Alaska were outspoken in racial discrimination against hiring resulting in greater Native participation in the CCC. In 1935 Dan Moller was reported to be the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) foreman for the Forest Service and involved in trail reconnaissance on skis (Daily Alaska Empire, 1935). He was in charge of the CCC crew that constructed the trail to Second Meadow, the site of the first ski lift and Second Cabin, just above the Treadwell Ditch.

Significance

The Dan Moller Cabin is significant due to its construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is therefore eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A— as a property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The period of significance is 1933 to 1937. The cabin is also eligible under Criterion C as the cabin embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction. The cabin is constructed in the Adirondack architectural style utilizing vertical log construction and native materials in its construction. The Adirondack style was extensively used by the CCC in Alaska but was not typical of log construction in Alaska.

Additionally, the Dan Moller Cabin is historically significant and eligible under Criterion A at the local level as it played a vital role in the growth of recreation and skiing and its long association with the Juneau Ski Club.

There are seven aspects of integrity and the Dan Moller Cabin retains its five of these aspects. It retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, workmanship and association. The location of the cabin, its setting and association in the Douglas Ski Bowl is essential in capturing the sense of early skiing in the Juneau area and the increased interest in recreation. The integrity of feeling and workmanship at the Dan Moller Cabin, construction of the cabin by the Civilian Conservation Corp in the Adirondack style, provides a historical sense of a particular period of time, much like many of the other structures constructed by the CCC in the Juneau area, such as the shelters at Auk Village day use area (JUN-382) and the many shelters along the Canoe Trail on Admiralty Island (SIT-0361, SIT-363- SIT-375).

The integrity of materials and design at the Dan Moller cabin have been compromised but they are still present. The design of the cabin has been compromised by the addition of the porch (on the north façade) and the addition of the woodshed (on the west façade). The original shake roofing of the Dan Moller cabin was replaced with a metal roof in 1983. The glass windowpanes, totally absent from the structure in 1983 as a result of vandalism, have been replaced with the plexiglass, however the original pattern of fenestration has been retained.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the Dan Moller Cabin, JUN-00927, be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A– as a property associated with Civilian Conservation Corps, a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The period of significance is 1933 to 1937. The cabin is also eligible under Criterion C - as the cabin embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction. The cabin is constructed in the Adirondack architectural style utilizing vertical log construction and native materials in its construction.

Additionally, the Dan Moller Cabin is historically significant and eligible under Criterion A at the local level as it played a vital role in the growth of recreation and skiing and its long association with the Juneau Ski Club.



Figure 7: Dan Moller Cabin, JUN-00927, photo taken October 9, 2002

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