

DINKEY RANGER STATION, WAREHOUSE
(Sierra National Forest Building FS2202)
Sierra National Forest
Dinky-Shaver Road at Dinky Creek
Shaver Lake vicinity
Fresno County
California

HABS CA-2895
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DINKEY RANGER STATION, WAREHOUSE

HABS No. CA-2895

Location: The warehouse is located in the compound of the Dinkey Ranger Station of the High Sierra Ranger District of the Sierra National Forest at Dinkey Creek, on Dinkey-Shaver Road, in the vicinity of Shaver Lake in Fresno County, California.

The building is Sierra National Forest No. FS2202, located at latitude: 37.06542, longitude: 119.15593, coordinate datum North American Datum 1983. This coordinate was obtained on May 2, 2013 by plotting its location on the 1:24000 Dinkey Creek, CA USGS Topographical Quadrangle Map.

Significance: The warehouse is a contributing element to the Dinkey Ranger Station, an historic district that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for its relationship to Sierra National Forest administrative history, and as an identifiable entity that retains its historic appearance from 1930s Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) construction.

Description: The Warehouse, FS2202, is a single story, rectangular wood-framed building, built in 1933 by the Forest Service with CCC labor. A small compressor shed is attached to the rear. The warehouse is clad with corrugated steel on the walls and roof. The projecting eaves have exposed rafters. A ten foot section of front wall has bevelled horizontal wood siding surrounding the barn-like doors; this may be a reconstruction of an earlier garage-type door. Multi-pane drop windows are on the primary façade. The interior is divided into small wood-framed rooms with exposed rafters throughout. The north half is four rooms on a concrete slab; the south half is one room with plank floor on a concrete foundation.

The warehouse is on a 1933 Dinkey Ranger Station Development Plan map by L. Glenn Hall, Landscape Architect, USDA Forest Service, Region 5. A penciled addition to the plan shows that at some point an unfulfilled proposal was made to replace the warehouse with another residence. Information is unavailable to determine if the warehouse was built from a standard plan, but it may be a local design or alteration of a standard design; the architect is unknown. This building differs from the other contributing elements in that it is not clad in wood but in corrugated metal and lacks the design elements of the other buildings (decorative vents, enclosed eaves, or eave brackets), likely because it was built simply for its utilitarian function.

History: The Dinkey Ranger Station is inextricably linked with the history of Dinkey Creek, a central area for recreation, the lumber industry, and livestock management.

Frank Dusy, a settler in Fresno County in 1864, is most often associated with Dinkey Creek. Dusy was one of the first Anglo explorers of the Kings River watersheds, and according to popular legend, it was his dog Dinkey for which the creek was named. Another story has it that the dog Dinkey was owned by four hunters who named the creek in 1863. In both stories, the

dog Dinkey tangled with a grizzly bear in defense of its master, losing its life and thus earning lasting notoriety in the name of the creek.

Dusy had his summer headquarters in Dinkey Flats, and in 1873 built a cabin possibly on Dinkey Meadow. Dusy's became the starting point for sightseeing and exploration trips into the higher Sierra in the 1880s as the Dinkey area became popular for camping. An 1892 publication entitled, The History of Fresno County, extolled Dinkey Creek for these values.

A wagon road to Dinkey Creek was an early extension of the main road from the valley cities of Fresno County to the timberlands. Dinkey Creek's popularity increased with vacationers and campers looking to escape the summer valley heat, and the potential of the timber resource was also beginning to be realized. Many families escaped the valley heat by working at shake making as a summertime occupation, and there was a market for the product when people returned to the valley in the fall.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, tourists and adventurers were coming to the Sierra to hike and camp in the beautiful mountains. The establishment and growth of tourism and recreational activities on the Sierra National Forest stemmed from three factors: the attraction to visitors, the availability of access, and Forest Service policies. The attraction to visitors came not only from larger societal trends that developed around interests in nature and increased opportunities for leisure, but also from specific properties built to attract vacationers. Despite the remote setting, reasonably comfortable access by rapidly improving roads allowed people to get to the mountains. And, in the early part of the twentieth century, the Forest Service was developing policy and regulations that encouraged such recreational uses. These factors, combined with a large and growing urban population of central and southern California, created a place and timing that were right for tourism and recreation to take hold in Dinkey Creek.

The Dinkey Creek area was also getting interest from large-scale lumber companies, including the Shaver Lake Lumber Company which acquired large tracts in the Dinkey area.

These activities in the Dinkey Creek area were an interest to the fledgling Forest Service, founded in 1905, which identified the need to provide administration of the public lands. During the winters of 1908 and 1909, the Sierra Forest Supervisor decided that winter quarters for the new Kings River Ranger District be established, and a Ranger Station was built on the Kings River. By the spring of 1910 new summer headquarters needed to be established and a new Ranger Station was built at Dinkey Creek.

In 1915, a 41-mile road from the city of Fresno brought regular automobile traffic to Dinkey Creek. The Dinkey Ranger Station had expanded by the late 1920s to meet the administrative needs with houses, an office, and a barn. Each season the Sierra National Forest rangers would move from their winter administrative site on the Kings River to their summer quarters at Dinkey Creek.

By the 1930s, big changes came to Dinkey Creek, as they did throughout the country. The Great Depression of the US had a tremendous effect on Forest Service activities, even at Dinkey Creek. The Sierra rangers had thousands of new untrained workers through the Civilian Conservation Corps programs. In 1933 on the Kings River Ranger District, a large CCC camp was near Dinkey Creek at Oak Flat.

The availability of this new labor force was key in reshaping the Dinkey Creek area. Fresno County was realigning State Route 168, and subsequently the Sierra National Forest would reconstruct the Dinkey Road from Shaver Lake with CCC labor. By 1936 the road was extended beyond Dinkey Creek. This reconstruction required a new motor vehicle bridge and by 1938, the new Dinkey Creek Bridge was built, and the pattern of traffic had changed from the earlier days. With the change in the road, a change in location of the Forest Service site made sense, and a new ranger station was built on Dinkey Creek north of the original site, to better serve the administrative needs.

Although in a new site, the Dinkey Ranger Station remained the Kings River District's summer headquarters, as an administrative center, public information office, and temporary residence for the District Ranger. The Ranger's Residence was built in 1931, the warehouse and assistant Ranger's residence in 1933, and the office/visitor center in 1934. A 1933 blueprint Site Development Plan by regional architect L. Glenn Hall shows these four primary buildings either in place or planned. Penciled in buildings apparently proposed for construction but which never came to fruition included an 8-car garage, wood sheds, and another new residence, leaving Dinkey Station today as it was in 1933.

During the years the CCC was in existence on the SNF, from 1933-1941, they built buildings, campgrounds, roads, bridges, and helped build the Dinkey Creek Road, making a lasting impact on the Dinkey Creek area.

Dinkey Ranger Station was centered on an area busy with recreation and logging activity in the 1930s, and these activities have never subsided. A 1964 Recreation Management Plan for Dinkey Creek noted that the area had become popular because of the ideal summer climate and pleasant surroundings and Dinkey Creek was now one of the major recreation areas on the Forest. A 1960s pamphlet for a motor tour of the Kings River District extolled the popularity of Dinkey Creek, noting the availability of the Ranger Station, campgrounds, restaurants, stores and other facilities. The Dinkey Creek area remains very popular for camping, horseback riding, fishing, and other recreational activities. Camp Fresno, Dinkey Inn, Clyde's Pack Outfit, Dinkey Campground, and other facilities continue to support the thousands of people who annually find Dinkey Creek to be a destination.

Through all these years, the Dinkey Ranger Station has remained an important administrative site for the SNF. The seasonal pattern established in the early part of the twentieth century continued into the 1980s. Winter headquarters were at Trimmer Ranger Station on the Kings River, but when spring came, the rangers moved up the hill to Dinkey Creek to better manage the logging and recreational activities.

In 1998, the District staff moved to the new High Sierra District Ranger Station. Dinkey Station no longer served as an administrative site, but continued to operate as a seasonal visitor center, and a fire engine crew inhabited some of the buildings. In 2012 the fire engine company moved to a new station, and Dinkey Station was bereft, for the first time since 1931, of inhabitants, except for the seasonal visitor center staff. Dinkey Station continues to serve the public seasonally in the visitor center.

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Measured Plan Drawing, 2012

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