

# MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE - HISTORY INVENTORY FORM

## Project: Local Historic Bridge Study - Phase II Elba, Winona County, Minnesota

Identification	
<b>Historic Name</b>	Chimney Rock Footbridge
<b>Current Name</b>	Chimney Rock Footbridge
<b>Field #</b>	
<b>Address</b>	Ped. Bridge Over Whitewater River in Whitewater State
<b>City/Twp</b>	Elba
<b>County</b>	Winona
<b>Legal Desc.</b>	Twp 107 Range 10 Sec 20 QQ NESE
<b>USGS Quad</b>	ELBA
<b>UTM Zone</b>	15N
<b>Datum</b>	NAD83
<b>Easting</b>	576615
<b>Northing</b>	4878351
<b>Property ID (PIN)</b>	

**SHPO Inventory Number** WN-ELT-034

**Review and Compliance Number**

**Form (New or Updated)** Updated

Description	
<b>Linear Feature?</b>	No
<b>HPC Status:</b>	Unknown
<b>Resource Type</b>	Structure
<b>Architect/Engineer</b>	CCC, WPA
<b>Style</b>	No Style
<b>Construction Date</b>	1935, 1938
<b>Original Use</b>	Recreation and Culture
<b>Current Use</b>	Recreation and Culture

### Description

The Whitewater State Park Chimney Rock Footbridge is located within Whitewater State Park, in Elba Township, Winona County, Minnesota. The heavily wooded, 2,700-acre park is situated in the limestone bluffs and deep ravines of southeast Minnesota. The Whitewater River and Trout Run Creek flow through the park. The Chimney Rock Footbridge sits in the central portion of the park and carries a pedestrian trail over the Whitewater River, connecting an island formed by a diversion channel for the swimming beach with the west bank of the River. The bridge also connects with the Chimney Rock Trail, which meanders through the limestone bluffs above the river.

The Chimney Rock Footbridge is a single-span, wood beam, Rustic Style pedestrian bridge. Constructed in 1935, the bridge was altered in 1938 to add an additional 13'6" to the length. Today, the bridge is 86' long, 6'6" wide, and rises approximately 12'6" above the Whitewater River. The substructure is comprised of two abutments constructed with rubble course limestone. The embankments under and around the bridge have stone rip-rap. The western approach to the bridge features six limestone steps which are flanked by limestone retaining walls. The eastern approach has a landing paved with limestone and flanked by limestone retaining walls.

The superstructure is comprised of two slightly arched stringers. The 13'6" long center section of the bridge is level, while the ends of the span are inclined, rising 1'0" from the abutments towards the center section of the span. Each stringer consists of two 12" x 18" timber beams. The beams support a wood plank deck comprised of 3" x 12" x 7' long planks laid perpendicular to the beams. The symmetrical, five-panel, timber and metal railing is detailed to give the perception that the bridge is an arch truss. From the masonry endposts, which are extensions of the abutments, the railing increases in height as it moves towards the center section of the span. The railing has timber railing posts - three bracketing the center panel and two bracketing the intermediate panels - and a timber top rail with a tube steel handrail above it. Between the ends of the bridge and the center panel there is diagonal bracing, with "X" pattern diagonal bracing in the center panel. A vinyl coated chain link mesh has also been added to railing panels, inside the diagonal bracing.

## EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

### Historical Context

Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941

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### **Historical Narrative**

According to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nomination for the Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources Historic, "Whitewater State Park was established in 1919 in order to protect the natural resources along the scenic Whitewater River valley. In the 1930s, the park became one of three in the state which was developed by both [Civilian Conservation Corp] CCC and [Works Progress Administration] WPA transient camps" (Anderson 1988:8-1). The first CCC camp – Company 1723 (SP-4) – arrived on April 28, 1934, and a second camp– Company 2709 (SP-9) – arrived on July 1, 1934. Company 1723 was transferred to a new location in September and left the large scale development of the park to Company 2709. Company 2709 was responsible for the construction of the picnic shelter, the Dam and Footbridge, restrooms, pump house, golf course garage, Park Manager's home and garage, and septic tank (Minnesota DNR 1998). Company 2709 also finished the swimming pool and beach, which was begun by Company 1723, and began work on the kitchen shelter (Minnesota DNR 1998).

In October 1935, Minnesota's quota of CCC camps was reduced. Subsequently, CCC Company 2709 left Whitewater State Park, leaving the development of the park only partially completed. In February 1936, a WPA transient camp was assigned to the park and they completed the development of Whitewater State Park (Anderson 1988:8-1). The WPA finished the kitchen shelter, and constructed "camp grounds, park entrance signs, beach bathhouse, stone water fountains, picnic tables, the walking bridge over the Whitewater River (The Chimney Rock Footbridge), six tourist cabins, a stone arch bridge, Gooseberry Glen kitchen shelter/restrooms, stone curbs, culvert, water supply tank and restrooms" (Minnesota DNR 1998).

The CCC established a campsite in the park and constructed buildings to house CCC workers while they were working in the park. The WPA also utilized this camp to house its workers. During World War II, this camp housed German prisoners-of-war who worked on local farms. In 1952, the CCC/WPA camp was entirely destroyed by a tornado (Anderson 1988:8-1).

### **Federal Relief Programs**

#### **Civilian Conservation Corps**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, which was a series of domestic programs that were enacted in the United States between 1933 and 1938, included two popular work-relief programs: the CCC and the WPA (renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939). The CCC was a federal work relief program that existed from 1933 to 1942 to provide employment for unemployed, unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25. President Roosevelt's vision for the program was "to create a civilian conservation corps to be used in simple work, not interfering with the normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects" (Anderson 1990:E11). As implemented, the CCC provided unskilled manual labor jobs to the unemployed to implement a nationwide natural resources conservation program. The CCC is known for its development and conservation of natural resources on lands owned by federal, state, and local governments. More than 77,000 Minnesotans were employed as CCC workers during the existence of the program, working in Minnesota's national forests, state forests, state parks, on private land or forests, and in erosion and flood control (Nathanson 2009; Anderson 1991:E13).

#### **Works Progress Administration**

Established in May 1935, and in existence until 1943, the WPA is perhaps the best-known federal relief program. Employing millions, the WPA had two functions. The first was to operate a nationwide effort to carry out small public works projects, such as the construction of public buildings, roads, bridges, and parks. The second was to coordinate the various activities of the "Works Program" (Anderson 1990:E48-E49). Special programs and projects of the WPA also employed specific trades, such as musicians, artists, writers, actors, archaeologists, engineers, and architects. The WPA employed 65,713 people in Minnesota (Nathanson 2009).

The WPA funded projects sponsored by both federal and non-federal agencies, with the majority being carried-out by local governments (Anderson 1991:E48-49). A wide range of projects were eligible for funding, including roads; public buildings; parks; public utilities; sewer systems; transportation facilities; flood control; soil conservation; and more (Anderson et al 1991:E49-E50). Engineering and construction projects represented the largest amount of WPA employment. Through the spring of 1940, these types of activities generated nearly 75 percent of the jobs created by the WPA (United States Federal

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Works Agency 1947:47). While nearly half the jobs created by the Engineering and Construction Division of the WPA were related to highway, road, and street projects, another third were related to three types of projects. These included water and sewer systems, and other public utility projects; projects for parks and other recreational facilities (excluding buildings); and public buildings (United States Federal Works Agency 1947:132).

#### Rustic Style

Rustic Style is a style of architecture that developed in the early and middle 20th century by the National Park Service. Rustic Style buildings and structures were designed to harmonize with the natural environment, not stand out. The hallmark of buildings and structures constructed in the Rustic Style are that they were constructed with whatever materials were available locally, utilized labor intensive building methods, and often had a hand-crafted appearance (Minnesota Historical Society 2014; Anderson 1991:E24). “The National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service considered rustic architecture the appropriate style for construction in state and national parks and forests” and thus most of the buildings and structures erected by the CCC and WPA are Rustic Style in design (Anderson 1991:E24). As such, these resources “are the legacy of the Depression-era work groups, whose efforts helped preserve vast areas of wilderness and created remarkable building and structures ... throughout the United States” (Minnesota Historical Society 2014).

Minnesota’s Rustic Style resources are local expressions of a nationwide philosophy of park development, and reflect the diverse resources of Minnesota’s lands. “Log construction took place in the northern portions of the state, where timber was plentiful. Stone buildings were more typical in the south and northwest. A combination of log and stone is common in the center section of the state” (Minnesota Historical Society 2014). Whitewater State Park has 29 Rustic Style buildings and structures within the park boundaries, including the Chimney Rock Footbridge.

#### The Chimney Rock Footbridge

Civilian Conservation Corp Company 2709 constructed the Chimney Rock Footbridge in 1935. Designed in the then-popular Rustic Style, the bridge is attributed to an architect in the CCC’s Minnesota Central Design Office by the name of N. Averill. Following the ethos of the Rustic Style, the stone and timber bridge was constructed of local materials so as to blend into its natural surroundings. The limestone used for the abutments and parapets was quarried within the park, and the timbers were harvested from the abundant surrounding forest.

Alterations were made to the bridge in 1938 by the WPA, possibly as a result of damage from heavy spring flooding. At this time, “the river channel was widened and additional riprapping was installed along the river bank under the bridge” (Anderson 1988:7-7). The overall length of the bridge was extended by 13’6”’; the length of this extension correlates with the length of the center section of the bridge. The original plan of the bridge shows stone landings at either end of the bridge, but does not show stairs on the west approach to the bridge, so it is likely that the alterations in 1938 included the construction of the stone stairs and landings at both ends of the bridge (Anderson 1988:7-7).

From its repairs in 1938, the bridge remained in service for nearly 70 years without any significant repairs or modifications. In August 2007, a flash flood struck Whitewater State Park, causing over \$4 million in damage. Due to the severity of the damage, the park was closed for nearly a year while clean up and repairs were made to its infrastructure. The Chimney Rock Footbridge was minimally damaged in the flood. A 2008 report that assessed the damage and outlined required repairs to park infrastructure describes the work that was needed to repair the Chimney Rock Footbridge:

Repair and restoration work at the Chimney Rock Footbridge will involve tuck-pointing of the western stone abutment where erosion of some mortared joints occurred. There will also be riprap added to stabilize portions of the river shore that were eroded away. High floodwaters also damaged four upright timbers that support the bridge handrails. These will be replaced with Douglas Fir timbers that are rough sawn and stained or painted to match the existing original timbers of the bridge (Letter in Minnesota SHPO Review & Compliance file No. 2008-1286, David Radford, Minnesota DNR, to Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota SHPO, February 7, 2008).

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received relief funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist with cleanup and structure rehabilitations. Therefore, the repairs to the Chimney Rock Footbridge

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had to comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The DNR designed the rehabilitation plans based on the 2008 report, and in accordance with the rehabilitation standards outlined in the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (the Standards)." The plans were reviewed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which concurred with the DNR that the proposed rehabilitation met the Standards and would have no adverse affect on the bridge (Flood Damage Assessment Letter in Minnesota SHPO Review & Compliance file No. 2008-1286, David Radford, State Parks Archaeologist, Minnesota DNR, to Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota SHPO, February 7, 2008; Minnesota SHPO Response Letter SPK.4.280.1.07b in Minnesota SHPO Review & Compliance file No. 2008-1286, Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota SHPO, to David Radford, State Parks Archaeologist, Minnesota DNR, March 25, 2008).

### **Significance**

The Whitewater State Park Chimney Rock Footbridge was listed in the NRHP in 1988, as a contributing resource to the Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources Historic District. The historic district is defined by the boundaries of the park during its development by the CCC and WPA and encompasses 563 acres. The district includes 29 contributing and five non-contributing resources. Included in the contributing resources are 9 buildings, 12 structures, including the Chimney Rock Footbridge, and three objects. The resources comprising the district are significant under NRHP Criterion A, in the area of Government "for their association with the social, political and economic impact of the Great Depression and the subsequent development of the various Federal Relief Programs which were responsible for their construction" (Anderson 1988:8-1). The period of significance for the historic district is 1934-1941. Within Whitewater State Park, the CCC and WPA were important for their efforts to conserve and develop natural resources nationwide, and in Minnesota, by providing manual labor jobs for the unemployed. The CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic resources within the park are also significant in the area of recreation for "their association with the development of the Minnesota state park system by providing the only state owned recreational facility in southeastern Minnesota" (Anderson 1988:8-1). Under NRHP Criterion C, the Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources are significant in the area of architecture "as an outstanding collection of rustic style buildings and structures featuring native limestone construction. The Shelter Building, Dam, and Footbridge in particular are exceptional examples of rustic design built with stone and timber" (Anderson 1988:8-1).

The Chimney Rock Footbridge contributes to the significance of Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources Historic District under National Register Criteria A and C as it is representative of the work of the federal relief programs stationed within the park. The Chimney Rock Footbridge also contributes to the collection of Rustic Style architecture found throughout the park. The bridge has been noted as an exceptional example of the Rustic Style for its hand-crafted appearance and its use of local materials which reflect the character of the surrounding area and reinforce the district as a whole (Anderson 1988:7-7).

As part of the current survey, the Chimney Rock Footbridge was evaluated as an individual resource within the historic context "Federal Relief Programs in Minnesota, 1933-1941." Within this context, the structure falls under the "Parks and Parkway" subtype of the "Social and Recreational Facilities" property type found in the "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941 Multiple Property Documentation Form (Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota MPDF)." Registration Requirement 4 of the "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota MPDF" states that "a building or structure constructed as part of a larger complex... may not be considered eligible unless the original landscape design and spatial and functional relationships remain intact. In such cases, the property should be nominated as an historic district" (Anderson 1994:F-28). The Chimney Rock Footbridge is located within Whitewater State Park, which was largely developed by the CCC and WPA, and contains a large collection of buildings and structures constructed by these programs. Since the park retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations with the CCC and WPA, the significance of the Chimney Rock Footbridge is largely derived from it being a component of this larger collection of resources within the park, rather than as an individual resource. Therefore, the Chimney Rock Footbridge does not meet the registration requirements for individual significance within the "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota MPDF."

### **Integrity -**

The Chimney Rock Footbridge retains its integrity of location and setting. In 1938, the WPA made alterations to the Chimney Rock Footbridge as part of an effort to repair flood damage. Rip rap was added to the abutments and embankments of the river,

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the structure length was extended 13'6", and the stairs were added to the west approach. While these improvements affect the integrity of the structure as originally designed and constructed by the CCC in 1935, they are historic in their own right as they were made as part of the continued development of the park by the CCC and WPA. As such, the 1938 changes contribute to the significance of the structure as a federal relief resource. In 2008, the Chimney Rock Footbridge was rehabilitated according to the Standards after being damaged by a flood in 2007. As part of the rehabilitation, the timber rails were repaired in-kind with new Douglas Fir stained to match the historic wood, and eroded and damaged masonry joints were repointed with mortar that matched the composition, strength, color, and profile of the original. This work slightly impacted the integrity of materials and workmanship since it resulted in the replacement of some historic fabric with new material. However, most of the historic fabric was retained. Moreover, since the work was all in-kind, it did not alter the bridge's integrity of design. Therefore, the bridge retains good integrity of feeling and association. Overall, the bridge retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

### **Recommendation**

The Whitewater State Park Chimney Rock Footbridge was listed in the NRHP in 1988 as a contributing resource to the Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources Historic District. The district is significant under NRHP Criterion A in the area of Government for its association with the federal relief programs, as well as the area of Recreation for its association with the creation of Minnesota's state park system. The district is also significant under NRHP Criteria C in the area of Architecture for its unique Rustic Style design. The Chimney Rock Footbridge was built within the 1934-1941 period of significance for the historic district and plays an integral role in conveying the importance of the federal relief programs in the development of the park and exemplifying the Rustic Style architecture of the park. The Chimney Rock Footbridge has been repaired twice, after floods in 1938 and 2007. In both instances, the rehabilitation of the Chimney Rock Footbridge has not altered the historic design intent of the structure or resulted in the substantial loss of historic materials. As such, the bridge retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and contributions to the historic district. Therefore, the Chimney Rock Footbridge is recommended as still eligible for the NRHP as a contributing resource to the Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources Historic District.

Within the historic context "Federal Relief Programs in Minnesota, 1933-1941," the Chimney Rock Footbridge does not meet the registration requirements for individual significance as outlined in the "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota MPDF." Therefore, the Chimney Rock Footbridge is recommended as not individually eligible for the NRHP.

### **Sources**

Anderson, Rolf T.

1988 Whitewater State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources National Register Nomination Form. Prepared by Rolf T. Anderson. On file at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

1990 National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941. Prepared by Rolf T. Anderson. On file at the State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [DNR]

1998 CCC and WPA Programs Build Whitewater State Park. Interpretive Services, Division of Parks and Recreation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. On file at Whitewater State Park, Altura, Minnesota.

Minnesota Historical Society

2014 Rustic Style Resources in Minnesota State Parks. Electronic document, <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/stateparks/>, accessed January 23, 2014.

Nathanson, Iric

2009 "The WPA in Minnesota: economic stimulus during the Great Depression." MINNPOST. Electronic document, <http://www.minnpost.com/politics-policy/2009/01/wpa-minnesota-economic-stimulus-during-great-depression>, accessed January 31, 2014.

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United States Federal Works Agency.  
1947 Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

### **Consultant's Recommendation of Eligibility**

Not Eligible - Individual

Contributing to Listed Historic District

### **Prepared By**

The 106 Group Ltd.

### **Date Surveyed**

10/15/2013

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**Property Photograph**



Facing SE



Facing NE

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Facing NE

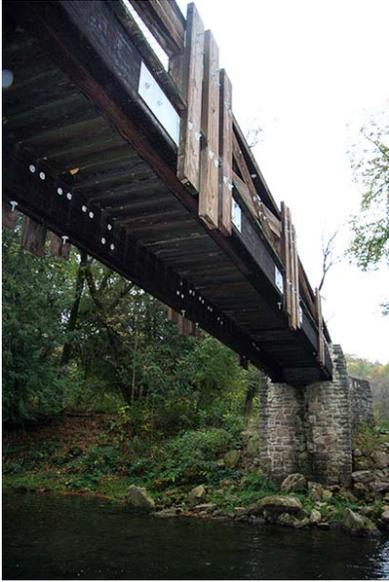


Facing NW

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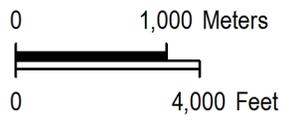
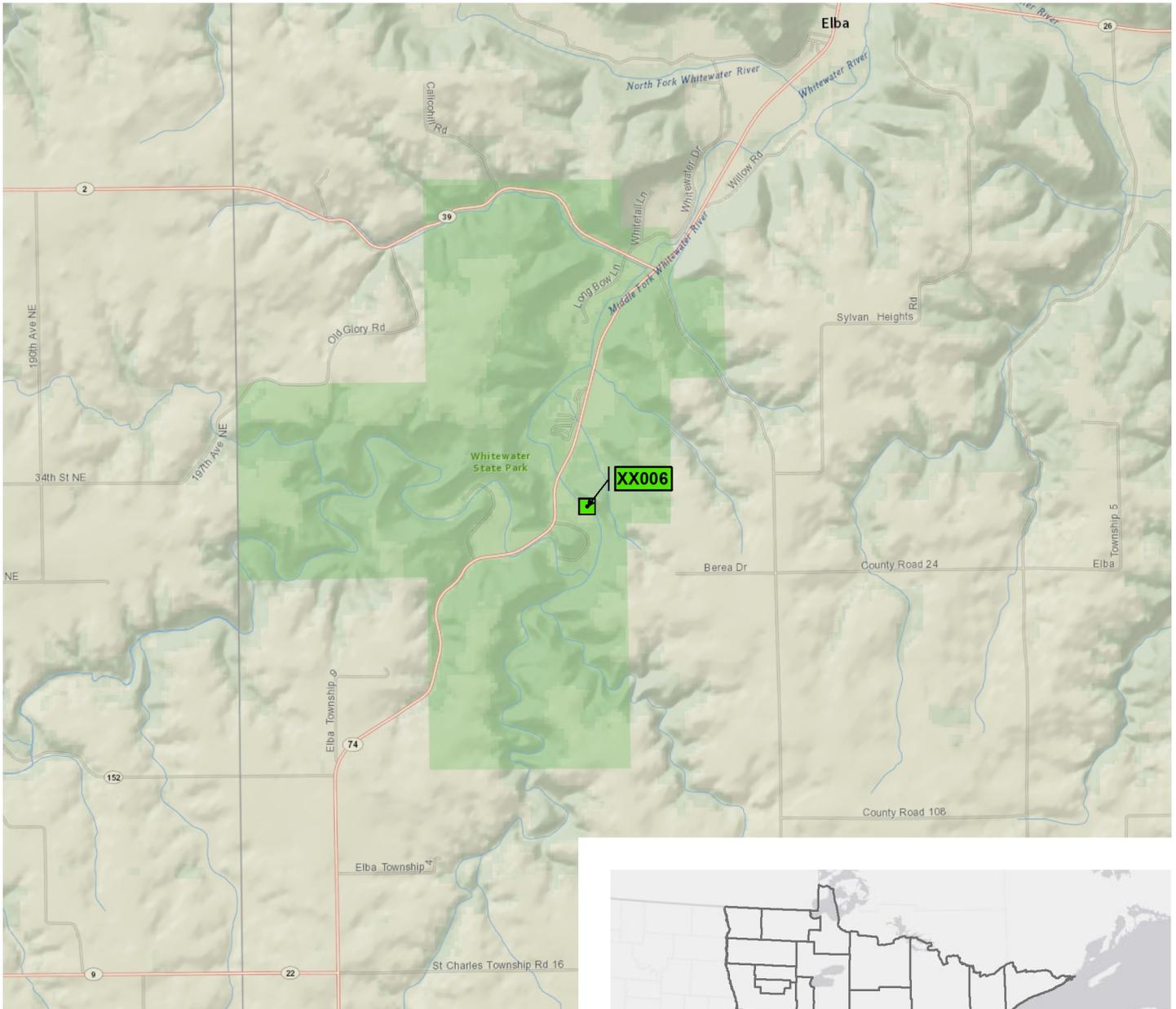
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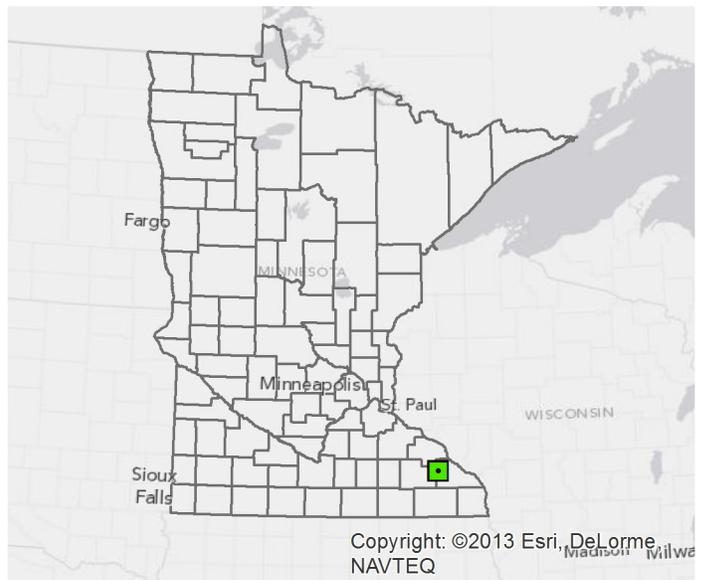
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