



Historic Register Report

Historic Name: Kitsap Cabin and the Mountaineer's Forest Theatre

Address: 3000 Seabeck Highway

City: Bremerton

County: Kitsap

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Historic Use: Recreation and Culture

Style: Arts and Crafts - Rustic / National Park

Built: 1918-1927

Architect: Storey, Ellsworth

Builder:

Smithsonian Number: 45KP00136

Date Listed: 6/1/2001

Listing Status: WHR

Classification: BLDG(S)

Resource Count: 3

Area of Significance: Social History

Level of Significance: Local

Listing Criteria:

Statement of Significance

Purchased in 1915 for \$371, the Mountaineer Club developed a 74 acre forested parcel of land west of Bremerton as a retreat location for the club. In 1917 the club began construction of a simple shingle covered cabin, known as the Kitsap Cabin. At 41 x 37 feet, the building consists of two rooms, a large multi-purpose room containing a river rock fireplace with hand hued cedar mantel, and a small kitchen area with pantry. The rustic nature of the building is highlighted by an eight-foot deep covered porch constructed of round peeled logs, and groupings of five-pane casement style windows. The cabin was officially dedicated by the Club President, Edmond Meany, on November 23, 1918 twelve days after the ending of WWI.

In the early 1920s, campfire skits and other entertainment that members had produced for their own pleasure evolved into productions for public. As a result in 1923 the club's first outdoor amphitheater was developed. Three years later, in 1926, a larger more elaborate amphitheater, today known as the Forest Theater, was constructed on a steep hillside not far from the Kitsap Cabin. As its name implies, the theater's architecture is the forest and its foundation the earth. A natural slope was terraced to provide the outdoor seating for 1,000 people and a row of ferns takes the place of spotlights at the base of the hill. The first play to be given in the new theater in 1926 was a production of *Reinald the Red Wolf*. Still used today, the annual show draws more than 5000 people to the site each year.

Conceived in 1906, the Mountaineers Club has grown to one of the largest outdoor and conservation groups in the county with membership of over 15,000 people. The organization has done a wonderful job compiling the history of their organization in a book called *The Mountaineer's: A History* published in 1998. Known as the Theatre in the Wild, the Forest Theatre and Kitsap Cabin are tangible on the ground reminders of the Mountaineer Club. The vernacular design of the cabin and theater are testaments to the ingenuity and skills of the members of the Mountaineers Club.

Photos

