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NEVADA COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission**  
**P.O. Box 1014**  
**Nevada City, California 95959**  
**info@nevadacountylandmarks.com**  
**530-559-8746**

13 December 2019

Nevada County Board of Supervisors  
950 Maidu Avenue  
Nevada City, CA 95959

Honorable Chair and Board Members:

At the 20 September 2019 meeting of the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Board that the application for landmark designation of a plaque commemorating the John Woolman School, the first Quaker boarding school in the western United States. The school, founded in 1963, was named for John Woolman, a prominent 18th century Quaker known for, among other things, his opposition to slavery, and his efforts to promote peace among settlers and indigenous tribes. The school is a historical example of the Quaker commitment to education. Though no longer a boarding school, the campus still provides educational programs.

The plaque will be provided by the applicant and property owner, the Sierra Friends Center. It is to be designated as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 19-04.

Amy Cooke of the Sierra Friends Center has provided a thorough level of research and documentation to accompany its application, which has been reviewed by the Commission for historical accuracy. The application and supporting documentation is enclosed.

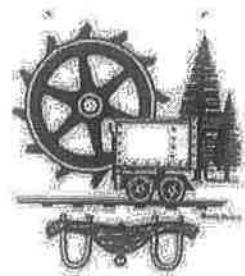
If you approve the application, please forward the resolution and accompanying documents to the County Recorder.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

  
Audrey Trauntvein, Commissioner

cc. Amy Cooke w/o enc.



County of Nevada  
State of California

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission  
Application for Registration of Historical Landmark

Name of proposed landmark John Woolman School

Location Nevada City, CA


Name of applicant Amy Cooke/Woolman at Sierra Friends Center

Address 1307S Woolman Ln, Nevada City, CA 95959

Home or work phone [REDACTED] cell phone [REDACTED]

Name and address of landowner upon whose property proposed landmark  
is located, if owner is not applicant N/A

I authorize the placing of a plaque or marker on site.

  
Landowner's signature

1-18-19  
Date

Brief history and description of proposed landmark

(attach additional sheets as necessary)

See attached.

Unique aspects or properties of proposed landmark

See attached.

How will the landmark be protected and maintained?

See attached.

Bibliography: Cite or attach available books, records, articles or other materials pertaining to the proposed landmark.

Books and articles:

- The Woolman Semester in Nevada City, Sierra Voices article, 10/11/2009. (attached)
- Woolman Campus New Home for Sierra Streams Institute, The Union article, 5/7/2018 (attached)
- Woolman Turns 50, The Union article, 8/15/2014. (attached)

Historical or civil records: (e.g., ownership, assessments etc.)

See attached: Conditional Use  
and Market Value documentation.

Other: (e.g. photographs, prints or drawings. Please list and attach separately)

attached are the following:

- Google Earth - main Campus
- Google Earth - Property Aerial View
- Stone House
- Quaker meeting House
- A-Frame Cabins
- Superson Cabins
- Dining Hall & Kitchen

  
Applicant's signature

1-18-19  
Date

=====  
This completed form and all related documents shall be sent to the:

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission  
Attention: Chairman  
P. O. Box 1014, Nevada City, Cal. 95959

An application must be considered solely on its historic or architectural merits and not for commercial gain, political benefits, or other non historical reasons.

An individual Commissioner can advise and counsel an applicant, but all applications must be considered by the full Commission, meeting in regular session.

**County of Nevada  
State of California**

**Name of proposed landmark:** John Woolman School

**Location:** Nevada City, CA

**Name of applicant:** Amy Cooke / Woolman at Sierra Friends Center

**Address:** 13075 Woolman Ln, Nevada City, CA 95959

**Home or work phone:** [REDACTED]

**Cell phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name and address of landowner upon whose property proposed landmark is located, if owner is not applicant:** N/A

**Brief history and description of proposed landmark**

The John Woolman School, a private Quaker boarding school, opened to students in 1963. Located in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the school is situated within the native homeland of the local Nisenan Indian tribe on property that was also previously a working ranch. The school originally occupied over 300 acres and included a central campus with classroom buildings, a dining hall, a farm where students did chores, A-frame cabins that functioned as small dorm rooms, and open areas with trees and grass. Surrounding the main campus, 206 acres were left as wilderness -- allowing space for hiking trails, land conservation, and to provide a habitat for area wildlife. Today most of the same building still stand though some have been repurposed.

In addition to occupying a beautiful site, the John Woolman School is historically significant as an important example of the profound commitment of American Quakers to education. From the origins of the faith in the seventeenth century to the modern practice of the twenty-first century, Quakers have supported innovative schools while adhering to two foundational beliefs in their educational programs:

1. Every human being has the capacity to personally experience truth.
2. Discovering truth is a process of continuing revelation fostered by silent reflection.

Historically Quaker programs for youth emphasized simplicity, equality, community, and non-violence, while fostering an appreciation for the natural world, and the importance of studying and understanding science. The John Woolman School was founded based on these educational principals in a place where the magnificence of the natural world in the Sierra Foothills would be an integral part of the educational experience.

The John Woolman School holds a unique place in the history of Quaker education. In 1668, George Fox, Quakerism's founder, created the first private Quaker schools in England. By 1689

The John Woolman School opened in 1963 with a curriculum based on the philosophy that each person has a unique and valuable perspective that must be heard. The Woolman campus provided a unique and rich opportunity for students to explore the schools pedagogical practices of inquiry, reflection, collaboration and experience in a community setting and through a full complement of academic classes. The innovative program continued until the boarding high school program closed due to financial difficulties in 2001.

After the closure in 2001, CPFEA recognized the importance of using the school campus to continue to further the Quaker educational goals for young people. A period of restructuring followed and the Woolman Semester program opened in the spring of 2004. The new program focused on the intersections of peace, social justice, and sustainability in an intensely rigorous one semester academic experience attended by students from all over the country. The beautiful natural environment provided the setting for students to spend a semester deeply immersed in contemporary topics and explore issues first hand. Students and staff engaged in small, intensive academic classes, with a lot of time devoted to the hands-on work of the community: the garden and orchard, the kitchen, and the forest. Student completed independent study projects and did off campus trips to see in-person what they were studying in the classroom in a program that was fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). When the Woolman Semester School closed in 2016 over 300 students had completed the coursework.

### **Current Site Usage**

The modern site consists of 236 acres after the sale of portions of the original land. The remaining campus represents the central core with administrative buildings, classrooms, dining hall, and numerous other structures. Our mission is to steward diverse learning communities and educational programs that weave together spirituality, peace, sustainability and social action, and the land continues to be integral to our programming. Adults and youth of diverse identities and geographies come to our site to experience programs based on Quaker ideals. They reconnect with the personal values of fairness, diversity and equality in our social systems, and learn to take action to heal the planet while living in a nurturing community on the land. Each of our program areas reflect this commitment:

1. **Camp Woolman.** Our summer camp is committed to teaching the values of acceptance, self-sufficiency, peace, justice, and sustainability largely through multi-day wilderness hikes where campers backpack into the wilderness with a trained guide.
2. **Teen Leadership Camp.** This summer experience is for older campers and trains them to become leaders and teachers as they spend most of their time hiking in the wilderness.
3. **The Outdoor School.** This program brings STEAM and NGSS programs into the natural setting, helping students see the direct connection and use of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics in the natural world.

- Partnering with Sierra Streams Institute a non-profit watershed science restoration, education and research institute, housed on campus, and providing water quality monitoring and education onsite
- Working with volunteers to do regular maintenance aspects of the land management
- Using grants and other funding to maintain existing levels as well as further beautify the campus

### **Bibliography**

Cite or attach available books, records, articles or other materials pertaining to the proposed landmark.

Books and articles about Woolman specifically:

1. The Woolman Semester in Nevada City: Live What You Believe.  
<http://sierravoices.com/2009/10/11/the-woolman-school-in-nevada-city-live-what-you-believe/>
2. Woolman campus new home for Sierra Streams Institute in Nevada City.  
<https://www.theunion.com/news/woolman-campus-new-home-for-sierra-streams-institute-in-nevada-city/>
3. Woolman Turns 50. <https://www.theunion.com/news/local-news/woolman-turns-50/>

**Historical or civil records:** (e.g. ownership, assessments, etc.)

See attached Conditional Use Permit and Market Value Documentation

Other: (e.g. photographs, prints or drawings. Please list and attach separately)

1. Google Earth - Main Campus
2. Google Earth - Property Aerial View
3. Stone House
4. Quaker Meeting House
5. A-Frame Cabins
6. 5-Person Cabins
7. Dining Hall and Kitchen

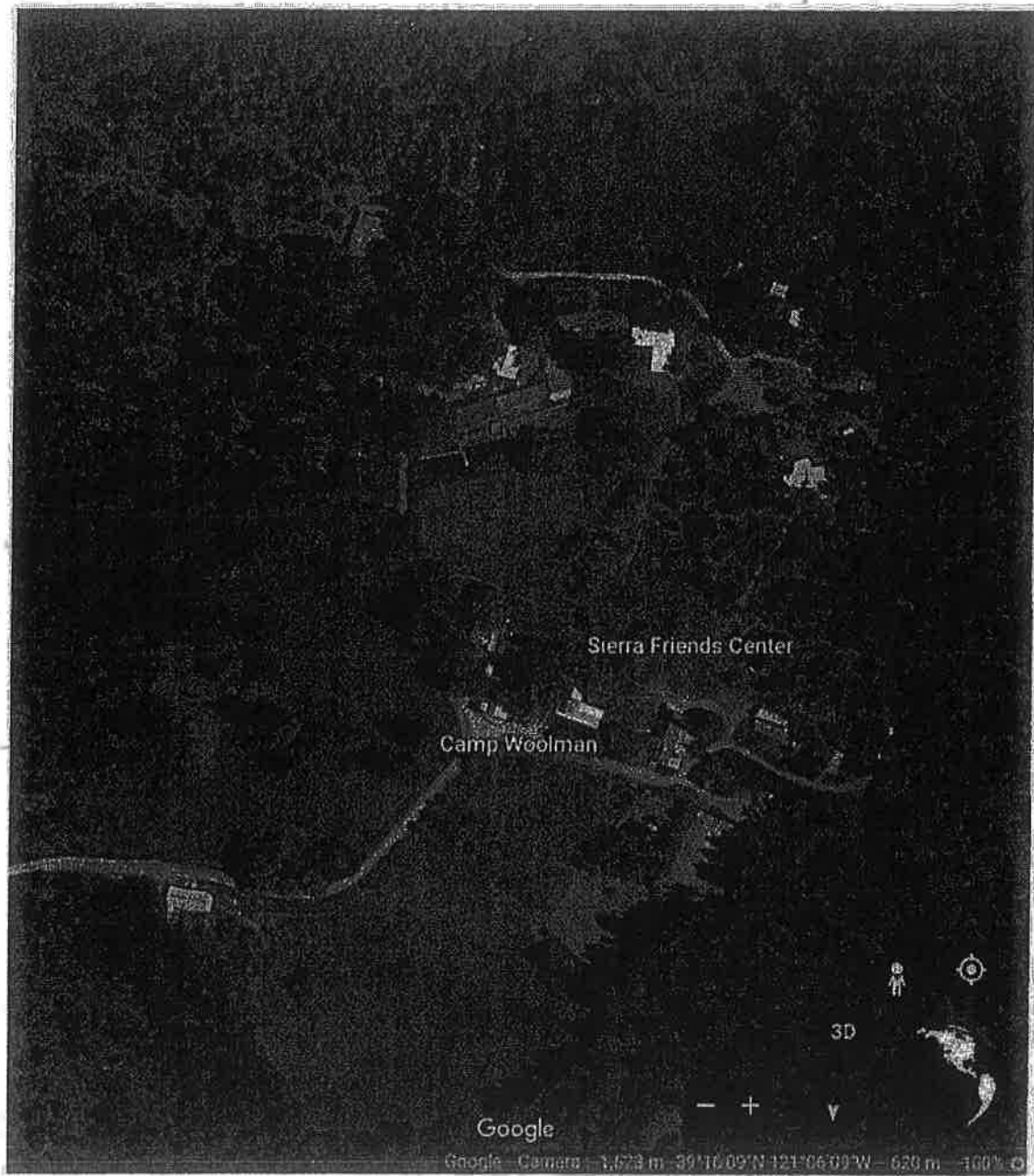
# Photographs, Prints or Drawings



**Other: (e.g. photographs, prints or drawings. Please list and attach separately)**

- Google Earth - Main Campus
- Google Earth - Property Aerial View
- Stone House
- Quaker Meeting House
- A-Frame Cabins
- 5-Person Cabins
  
- Dining Hall and Kitchen

Google Earth – Main Campus



Google Earth – Property Aerial View

