**History:**

The Simpson Lake Cabins (also known as Simpson Lake Lodge) are three log cabins located on the east shore of Simpson Lake in the Wind River Mountains. They are a truly special and unique historic resource. It is rare that any historic resource exists that is specifically related to recreational use, in this case dude ranching, on primitive or wilderness lands. Simpson Lake Lodge was built in 1926 by three expert craftsmen who used hand tools to create exquisite detail in the main lodge and the two guest cabins. Most of the building materials—logs, stones, sand, etc. were gathered on site or from the immediate vicinity.

The cabins are historically significant due to their exceptional workmanship, and their extremely remote location makes the workmanship even more impressive. In order to build the cabins, the builders hauled the original cook stove, milled lumber, cement, and miscellaneous tools and supplies by wagon up the Union Pass Road, and then to Moon Lake. They built a raft and floated the materials across Moon Lake, then hauled them the remainder of the way to the site by horse pulled travois. The three cabins each have two rooms, saddle notching, sawn log ends, split log floors, milled lumber ceilings, tar paper roofs, split log door and window moldings, and stone foundations. The cabins are significant also because of their connection to “tie-hacking” in Wyoming, in which railroad ties were harvested from trees and floated downriver to railroad construction sites.

Formerly known as the “The Three Waters Hunting and Fishing Camp”, Charlie Moore of the CM Ranch bought the cabins shortly after they were built and renamed the site “Simpson Lake Lodge.” The Lodge became a popular part of his dude ranch operation. In 1952, Les Shoemaker, who was a local forest ranger, and his wife Alice, purchased the CM Ranch and Simpson Cabins from Charlie Moore. Les and Alice loved people and they took genuine pleasure in sharing the CM and the Simpson cabins with their guests. In 1992, the cabins were added to the National Register of Historic Places. Use of the cabins continued until 1997 when the CM Ranch...
was purchased by the Kemmerer family, and ownership of the structures was assumed by the Shoshone National Forest.

The Simpson Lake cabins have stood against brutal winters and harsh elements at an altitude of 9780 feet for almost 90 years, which is a true testament to their exquisite log construction by exceptional craftsmen. They are cherished by many local residents as well as the hundreds of recreational visitors who stayed in the cabins during a 70 year span. The cabins at Simpson Lake were rapidly deteriorating and required stabilization of the roofs and foundations to prevent further decline. Work began in summer 2016 through a cooperative partnership which includes the Forest Service, Fremont County and HistoriCorps.

**Project Location:**

Wind River Mountains  
Fremont County, Wyoming

The GPS location of the site is:  
43.421903, -109.740951

**Closest town:**

Dubois, Wyoming

HistoriCorps is a service learning partner of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture committed to the preservation and stewardship of significant resources on public lands.