

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name Fitzpatrick Ranch Historic District Done OK w/State CE 6-11-81

historic Isabel Territorial Post Office/Fitzpatrick Ranch

and/or common Nevada Lake Ranch

2. Location NW of Avon

street & number Rural Route ___ not for publication

city, town Avon Helmsville vicinity of congressional district 1

state Montana code 030 county Powell code 077

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
		___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

street & number 32 South Ewing

city, town Helena ___ vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Engineering Bureau

street & number 32 South Ewing

city, town Helena state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition	See below	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fitzpatrick Ranch Historic District is seventeen miles northwest of Avon, Montana on State highway 141. The ranch is located in the narrow valley formed by Nevada Creek as it flows northwest between the Garnet Range and the foothills of the continental divide.

Much of the Fitzpatrick Ranch lands were flooded in the 1930's by the reservoir formed behind Nevada Creek Dam, or have been sub-divided into other ownerships. However, the ranch buildings still stand, lying at the upper end of the reservoir. They are clustered near the confluence of Buffalo and Nevada Creeks.

There are nine major buildings at the ranch, six of which have historic associations. The historically significant buildings date from the 19th century, and trace the ranch's development from an isolated miner's log cabin to a combination territorial post office, stage stop and homestead and then into a large, widely admired ranch.

The historic buildings at the ranch have maintained a good degree of integrity, and their location, tucked between the slopes of Buffalo Gulch, effectively mitigate the visual and aural impacts created by nearby highway 141 and Nevada Creek Reservoir. The following descriptions note changes made to the buildings, and are keyed to the accompanying sketch map entitled "Fitzpatrick Ranch".

The following buildings contribute to the historic character of the District;

1. Log Dwelling (Circa 1872, Circa 1885) "L" shaped, 14x21 (front) and 14x20 (rear) one story, gable roofed, rock foundation. Rear section dates from at least as early as 1872. Front section dates from between 1885-90. Wood shingle roof except for metal roof on front slope. Vertical, rough cut board siding in gable ends. Brick chimney, covered corners.

The rear section of the cabin was built and used by Jimmy Isabel, who mined and prospected in the valley in the 1870's. The solitary cabin was the Isabel, Montana, Territorial Post Office from 1885 to 1888. The front section was added by J.F. Fitzpatrick, who purchased the cabin in 1885. It also served as a stage stop for several years during this period, and housed the Fitzpatrick family from 1885-1892. In later years it was used as a bunkhouse, then as a chicken coop and now is restored and used as a residence.

Although the present windows in the cabin may be larger than they were originally, this change appears to have been before 1917. The cabin has been re-daubed in recent years.

2. Log Dairy Barn (circa 1885) 23x30x16' high. One story plus loft. Vertical board siding in gable ends. Corners are lap notched on lower level, saddle notched above. Stanchions and gutters are still in place.

3. Small log barn (circa 1885) 19x23, one story, gable roofed with plank roofing covered by corrugated metal roofing. Corrugated plastic skylight recently placed in roof. Covered corners. Board and batten siding in gable ends.

(See continuation sheet.)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

81

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 1

4. Calf Barn and Poultry Building: (circa 1885, and 1898) Log, 1885 calf barn is 16x24, one story plus a frame extension (approx. 1920) connecting it with rear of the frame, 1898 chicken coop. Log section also used by Fitzpatrick as a workshop. Saddle notched corners. Connects perpendicularly with frame section to form a "T".

Frame section is two stories, measuring 15x23, gable roofed, with plan~~ed~~ roofing and a wood, frame cupola at its peak for ventilation. Clapboard siding, with vertical siding on gable ends. There is a frame, one story, 8x15 lean-to on end of the coop.

5. Small frame dwelling (1898), 17x24 one story frame building. Gable roof with wood shingle roofing. Brick chimney. Clapboard siding. Open porch runs length of front facade. Originally built for storage, then may have been used as a bunkhouse. Now used as a residence.

6. Main Dwelling (1892; 1898) Victorian period home. Generally "L" shaped 18x69' and 31x29' (max.) one and two stories, frame, stone foundation, wood shingle roofing.

Central section of house was built as a two story log cabin in 1892. It was covered with shiplap siding in 1898. Has a truncated hip roof, and a gabled dormer on front and rear facades.

The two story, 18x69 section, built in 1898, has clapboard siding, and an open hip roofed porch running along its length. There are ornamental spindels along a portion of the porch frieze. The gabled roof has wood shingles and is interrupted by two gabled dormers on the front facade. The roof is topped by two capped, brick chimneys.

The one story gable roofed section which forms the "L" also was constructed in 1898. It also has clapboard siding and a capped brick chimney. The section entrance on the inside of the "L" has a small gable roofed porch, with posts and brackets, a balustrade, and spindrels along its frieze. There is a "sunburst" pattern in the porch's gable end.

A one story shed roofed section, also built in 1898, extends slightly from the bottom of the "L". It has thick rock walls to four feet above ground level, and clapboard siding above. Used as a root cellar.

The house is built close by the south facing bank of Buffalo Gulch, protecting it from cold north winds.

The interior of the house has retained a number of original features, including wainscoting, tongue in groove ceilings decorated with colored flower style stencils and a built-in china cabinet.

There have been some minor changes on both the exterior and interior of the main house. The latticework has been removed from the base of the porches, and the stone foundations have been cemented over. Spindrels have been removed from the large porch where it has been enclosed in glass as a greenhouse. The greenhouse and three

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

81

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 2

passive solar heaters on the buildings south facade date from the ranch's use as a demonstration site for "appropriate technology" in the mid 1970's. A rustic pole fence bordering the house's front lawn also dates from the mid 1970's.

Interior changes dating from the mid 70's include the addition of a rock floor in the kitchen and barn wood on several wall surfaces.

The following buildings are less than 50 years old, but do not detract from the district's historic character.

7. Machine shed and storage (1950) 20x60, one story, gable roof with metal roofing. Rough cut board and batten siding.

8. Bunkhouse (circa 1940) 15x19, one story, frame, slightly pitched gable roof with wood shingles. Shiplap siding. Cabin type commonly found at logging and forest work camps. Moved to ranch by Jack Keiley in late 1950's. Now used as a workshop.

The following building is less than 50 years old and intrudes on the historic character of the district.

9. Greenhouse 1975, 7x9, clapboard siding, glass roof.

Other buildings in the complex include privys behind both occupied residences, and the remnants of an icehouse, constructed by Jimmy Isabel, probably dating from the 1870's.

The boundaries of the Fitzpatrick Ranch Historic District are those drawn for the Montana Institute of Appropriate Technology, which occupied the ranch in the mid 1970's. Those boundaries include the portion of Buffalo Gulch holding the ranch buildings, and include all state owned lands in the immediate vicinity of the buildings.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1872 (?) - present **Builder/Architect** James Isabel, J.F. Fitzpatrick and others

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fitzpatrick Ranch, located in Western Montana's Nevada Creek Valley, is significant first for its unusually large number of historic associations; the ranch was a territorial post office, a stage stop and one of early Montana's prominent dairies. Also, the ranch gains historic significance from J.F. Fitzpatrick's active role in state and local politics around the turn of the century.

In addition to their specific historic associations, the extant ranch buildings are excellent visual representations of the two main phases of the Nevada Creek Valley's early development, the post civil war period of intensive mining activity, and the settlement of the valley by homesteaders in the last two decades of the 19th century. Hence, in a particular as well as general way, the buildings reflect the history of the Nevada Creek Valley. Moreover, they retain a good degree of integrity, thus reinforcing their historic value.

The log cabin at the ranch dates from at least as early as 1872, when miner Jimmy Isabel filed claims in the area. An 1872 U.S. Government Land Survey shows his cabin at its current location at the confluence of Buffalo and Nevada Creeks.

Jimmy Isabel used the cabin until 1885, when it was designated as Isabel, Montana Territorial Post Office. He sold the cabin-cum-post office to J.F. Fitzpatrick that same year.

Fitzpatrick had come to Montana in 1873, travelling up the Missouri by steam boat to Fort Benton. He worked as a miner in Butte, a teamster in Anaconda and ranched in partnership with "Copper King" Marcus Daly in the upper Deer Lodge Valley.

During Fitzpatrick's tenure as postmaster, the log cabin comprising Isabel, Montana was the center of community life for a portion of the Nevada Creek Valley. In addition to its role as a post office, it served as a stage stop for the weekly run from the towns in the Little Blackfoot River Valley to the lower Nevada Creek Valley town of Helmsville. Area miners, homesteaders and workers at the sawmill up Buffalo Creek would collect their mail or perhaps catch the stage at the cabin.

Isabel Post Office was closed in 1898 and a new post office was opened in the growing community of Washington Gulch, four miles up Nevada Creek. However, by then Fitzpatrick and his wife Anna had established a viable homestead. They had constructed a log dairy barn, a log grain storage shed and a log carriage barn. Jimmy Isabel's cabin had been enlarged to accommodate Fitzpatrick's large family as well as the operation of the post office. Fitzpatrick's patented the homestead in 1890. In 1892, a two story log home was constructed.

About that time, Fitzpatrick became active in Deer Lodge county politics. He was elected county commissioner in 1892, and sheriff in 1894. During his four years as sheriff he moved with his family to the town of Deer Lodge.

(See continuation sheet.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 17.2 acres

Quadrangle name Nevada Lake

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	2
---	---

3	6	4	3	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	8	3	2	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	2
---	---

3	6	4	5	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	8	2	8	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

C

1	2
---	---

3	6	4	3	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	8	2	7	4	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	2
---	---

3	6	4	1	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	2	8	3	0	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

E

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Westenberg

organization

date

street & number 19 North Benton

telephone 443-1274

city or town Helena

state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marcella Sheffy

title

Deputy SHPO

date

5-20-81

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only,
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

1

Returning to the ranch in 1898, Fitzpatrick began construction of a large frame house. The 1892 log home was covered with siding and two gable ended additions were attached creating an "L" shaped Victorian period cottage. A large frame barn, a frame chicken house and a frame storage shed were also built that year. Fitzpatrick then returned to political life, gaining a seat in the 1899 legislature.

In spite of the demands of raising fourteen children, serving as a postmaster and holding a number of public offices, by 1900 the John and Anna Fitzpatrick's ranch had become an impressive and prosperous one. The Fitzpatrick's fine buildings were intelligently situated in Buffalo Gulch to protect them from the winds blowing through the Nevada Creek Valley. Most of their 1,000 acres of land was lush hay meadow. The Fitzpatrick's specialty was dairying, and the butter they produced at the ranch was sold directly to hotels and restaurants in Helena and beyond.

Although no longer a stage stop or post office, in 1900 the ranch was still a favorite stop for the Fitzpatricks' many friends and neighbors. Progressive Men of Montana, published in 1902, described the ranch as having "the best improvements... including the recent construction of a fine residence of modern design and conveniences, one of the most attractive farm homes in the state and one in which an atmosphere of refinement and culture are always found."

The Fitzpatricks operated the ranch until 1917, when Mrs. Fitzpatrick developed a heart condition and doctors recommended that she move from the high mountain valley to lower, warmer elevations. The ranch was sold and the Fitzpatricks resettled in California.

The ranch was acquired in the late 1930's by the Montana Department of Natural Resources as part of the Nevada Creek Irrigation Project. Nevada Creek was dammed and water backed to within several hundred yards of the ranch buildings.

Various families occupied the ranch buildings until the mid 1970's. At that time the buildings were briefly occupied by the Montana Institute of Appropriate Technology. The original cabin and the 1898 storage house now serve as caretakers' residences for the ranch.

The ranch's location within the banks of Buffalo Gulch diminish the impact of 20th century changes in the surrounding landscape; developments such as a nearby highway, and the waters of Nevada Creek Reservoir do not significantly impair the historic integrity of the ranch. Except for the log carriage barn and the 1898 frame barn, the major ranch buildings still stand, with no major alterations and intrusions. The ranch's remaining structures still effectively chronicle its colorful evolution from a solitary miner's cabin to a log homestead, and to a widely respected dairy farm.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

BI

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

1

A.W. Bowen Company, Progressive Men of the State of Montana, Chicago, 1902.

Butte Daily Post, January 16, 1928, page 12.

Butte (Intermountain) Pictorial Annual, 1886.

Rose Fitzpatrick Coughlin, Anaconda, Montana, personal communication, August and December, 1980.

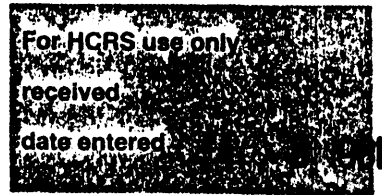
Jack Keiley, Helena, Montana, personal communications, December, 1980.

Montana Postal History Society, Montana Post Offices, Havre, Montana 1975.

Nick Vroman, Fargo, North Dakota, personal communications, August and December, 1980.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 10-verbal bound. Page 1

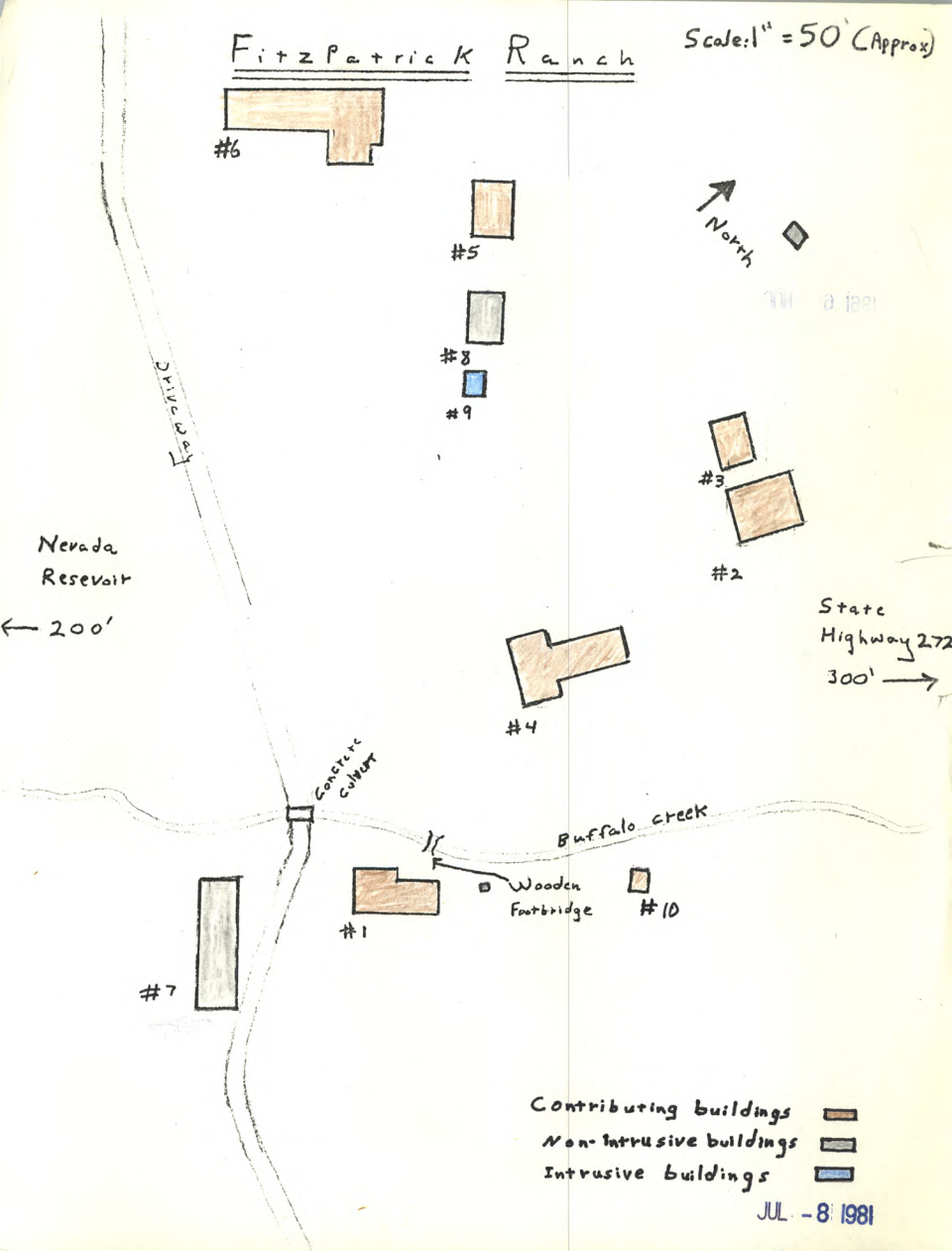
Beginning at a point marked True Point of Beginning of Tract #13 M.L. Haiges RLS Survey Completed May 1976.

Thence $S34^{\circ}25'E$, a distance of 1155.0 feet to a point not set. Thence $N70^{\circ}30'E$ a distance of 832' to a point on the south boundary of state highway no. 272. Thence NW along south boundary of State highway no. 272 a distance of 942.0 feet to a point on M.L. Haiges Survey of Tract #13. Marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar, with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S. Thence $N68^{\circ}43'03"W$ a distance of 167.89 feet to a point marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S. Thence $S45^{\circ}28'32"W$ a distance of 157.55 feet to a point marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S. Thence $S01^{\circ}07'35"W$ a distance of 104.71 feet to a point marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S. Thence $S77^{\circ}32'18"W$ a distance of 83.69 feet to a point marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S. Thence $N69^{\circ}42'02"W$ a distance of 463.07' to a point marked with a $5/8 \times 24$ " re-bar with aluminum surv-cap marked Haiges 2520S, to the point of beginning.

This tract contains 17.2 acres.

Fitzpatrick Ranch

Scale: 1" = 50' (Approx)



#6

#5

#8

#9

#3




#2

#4

#1

#7

#10

- Contributing buildings 
- Non-intrusive buildings 
- Intrusive buildings 

JUL - 8 1981