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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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MAR 8 1994

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name: Rim Rock Drive Historic District  
other names/site number: Scenic Rim Rock Road; 5ME5944

### 2. Location

street & number: Colorado National Monument (N/A) not for publication  
city, town: Grand Junction, Colorado (X) vicinity  
state: CO code: 008 county: Mesa code: 077 zip code: 81521

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
( ) private	( ) building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
( ) public-local	(X) district	_____	<u>2</u> buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site	_____	_____ sites
(X) public-Federal	( ) structure	<u>4</u>	_____ structures
	( ) object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Colorado National Monument MPS  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (X) nomination ( ) request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (X) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Edmund J. [Signature] 3/8/94  
Signature of certifying official Date

Utah Department of Heritage  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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In my opinion, the property (X) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

[Signature] March 26, 1993  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

(X) entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 4/21/94  
( ) See continuation sheet

( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.

( ) removed from the National Register.

( ) other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Functions or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Transportation/road-related (vehicular)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Transportation/road-related (vehicular)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)  
  
Other: No style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)  
  
foundation N/A  
walls N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof N/A  
other asphalt, concrete, stone  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Introduction

The Rim Rock Drive Historic District is a linear district situated within Colorado National Monument, a 32-square mile area of colorful and scenic geological formations administered by the National Park Service. The monument is located approximately four miles southwest of Grand Junction in extreme west-central Colorado and embraces a number of scenic, deeply-cut canyons, monoliths, and mesas, ranging from less than five thousand to more than seven thousand feet in elevation. Rim Rock Drive is a paved, two-lane, two-way 22.42 mile long highway which runs on a generally northwest-southeast axis through the monument along the rims of the major canyons. Rim Rock Drive Historic District includes the road, three tunnels, and numerous associated roadway features which were a part of the road design, including scenic overlooks, guard walls, retaining walls, culverts, ditches, drop inlets, and drainage tunnels. In order to incorporate all associated roadway features into its boundaries, the typical width of the linear district is 300 feet. The district narrows at a few points where there are no associated features in order to exclude noncontributing resources. In two areas, the district's boundaries are extended to include diversion ditches associated with the road. The total area of the district is approximately 786.8 acres. The Rim Rock Drive Historic District maintains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Rim Rock Drive Historic District meets the registration requirements specified in the "Colorado National Monument Multiple Property Submission." Historic resources of the district fall under the property type "Depression-Era Scenic Automobile Highway Within Colorado National Monument." The district is composed of six resources. Four are structures, including one scenic automobile highway with its associated features, and three tunnels, with all evaluated as contributing. The two remaining resources are modern entrance kiosks on the road and are evaluated as noncontributing buildings, falling outside the period of significance for the district. Within the district, the four contributing resources are associated with the historic context developed in the multiple property nomination form: "Development of Automobile Routes and Access, 1912-1950." None of the resources have previously been listed in the National Register.

The registration requirements listed in the related multiple property submission form were utilized to determine the contributing or noncontributing status of resources within the district. Among the criteria utilized for evaluating the contributing structures were: date of construction; historic association with Depression-era public works roadbuilding projects and the ability to convey that association; and integrity of setting, location, materials, design, craftsmanship, and original plan.

Only structures of substantial size were counted as separate elements of the district. Less substantial features associated with the roadway, such as culverts and retaining

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walls, were deemed to be an integral part of that structure and were not evaluated separately, but were viewed as contributing to or detracting from the overall integrity and significance of the road. Due to the massive number of features associated with the 22.42 mile roadway structure, including some 210 culverts alone, representative examples of each associated feature type were examined for integrity and significance. Representative features not readily visible from the road were selected for examination by Merle Palmer, Colorado National Monument Maintenance Chief, and Hank Schoch, Colorado National Monument Chief Ranger. Traveling from the west, or Fruita, entrance to the monument, the first representative example of each associated feature was recorded. Features of the same type encountered subsequently were counted but not recorded.<sup>1</sup> Less significant features, such as signage, metal posts with reflectors, and asphalt curbs were not counted.

The USGS map accompanying this form identifies the location of resources within the district and recorded features associated with the road. Numbers in parentheses in the following discussion reference photographs indicated on the sketch map of the Rim Rock Drive Historic District.

Description of Major Resources

The topography of Colorado National Monument, the goal of creating a scenic highway, and reliance on manpower instead of heavy equipment dictated Rim Rock Drive's path and construction techniques. From the west entrance near Fruita, *Rim Rock Drive* climbs through Fruita Canyon. From an elevation of 4,690 feet on the valley floor, the road employs a series of long switchbacks and two tunnels to reach the top of the mesa at an elevation of 5,700 feet, somewhat north of the Saddlehorn area. (4, 16)

*Tunnel No. 1*, constructed 1936-37, is found at milepost 2.14. (4, 6, 7) This tunnel was blasted through the solid sandstone canyon wall using a pilot bore and is sixteen feet eight inches high, twenty-six feet six inches wide at its base, and 236 feet long. The tunnel has arched entrances without exterior portals and has, from its creation, been lined with gunite, which follows the unevenness of the excavated rock. Above the tunnel entrances are rock walls which extend for a great height. The roadway inside the tunnel is concrete paved, and has narrow concrete curbing flanking the twenty-four-foot wide pavement.

A short distance beyond *Tunnel No. 1*, at milepost 2.30, is *Tunnel No. 2*. (8, 10) The road between *Tunnels 1* and *2* was washed out by heavy rains in August 1968 and was subsequently rebuilt along the same plan. *Tunnel No. 2* was built 1936-37 and was blasted through solid sandstone using a pilot bore. Its excavation preceded that of *Tunnel No. 1*. *Tunnel No. 2* measures 185 feet long, sixteen feet eight inches high, and twenty-six feet six inches wide. The tunnel has arched entrances, no exterior portals, and has never been lined.

(X) See continuation sheet

<sup>1</sup> The methodology for this nomination is outlined in correspondence from Richard A. Strait, Associate Regional Director of Planning and Resource Preservation, to Barbara Sudler, State Historic Preservation Officer, June 20, 1990.

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The twenty-four-foot roadway through the tunnel is paved with concrete and is flanked by narrow concrete curbs.

Exiting from Tunnel No. 2, the road continues in a southerly direction, reaching the mesa top and following the western rim of Monument Canyon. Crossing Monument Mesa, the road turns southeastward and follows the southern rim of Upper Ute Canyon. Rounding the southern end of Ute Canyon the road reaches its highest point at 6,640 feet and then proceeds eastward along the southern rims of Red and Columbus canyons to Cold Shivers Point. Stone guard walls are found at many places along the length of Rim Rock Drive and contribute to the highway's character. (18, 20, 37)

From Cold Shivers Point, Rim Rock Drive begins its twisting descent from the mesa (36) and proceeds through *Tunnel No. 3* into No Thoroughfare Canyon. Tunnel No. 3 at milepost 19.92 was the last tunnel constructed along the roadway and represents the final phase of construction of the road. (38, 39) The tunnel construction, using a pilot bore, was begun in 1940 and was completed except for some trimming by 1941. The advent of World War II delayed the completion of the tunnel until 1950. Tunnel No. 3 was blasted through solid sandstone and has arched entrances with no exterior portals. The dimensions of Tunnel No. 3 are 530 feet long, sixteen feet eight inches high, and twenty-six feet wide. The concrete roadway inside the tunnel is twenty-four feet wide and is flanked by narrow concrete curbing. Subsequent to its construction, the tunnel was lined with gunite, which extends to the exterior entrances. More recently, six drainage holes were drilled beside the west entrance of Tunnel No. 3 in an effort to deal with a moisture problem.<sup>2</sup>

After passing through Tunnel No. 3, the road proceeds via a series of switchbacks to the canyon floor, where it exits the east entrance of the monument at an elevation of 4,930 feet. In its total length, the highway meanders 22.42 miles to connect two points that are only separated by eight miles on a straight line.

The roadway maintains its basic as-built condition and the course of the road has not been altered. A Glade Park intersection island was added after construction of the road was completed. The No Thoroughfare Canyon portion of the road and the segment immediately to the west were paved in 1951, while the northern sections of Rim Rock Drive had been paved by 1947.<sup>3</sup> Plans for paving the entire roadway had existed at least since 1937.<sup>4</sup>

(X) See continuation sheet

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<sup>2</sup> Milepost information is based on field work and on National Park Service, "Road Inventory, Route File Data: Rimrock Drive," computer printout, July 26, 1983. All milepost figures are referenced from the Fruita entrance eastward. Tunnel dimensions were obtained from U. S. Federal Highway Administration, Bridge Safety Inspection Report: Colorado National Monument (Denver, Colorado: U. S. Federal Highway Administration, September 18, 1986) for each of the tunnels.

<sup>3</sup> Rose Houk, p. 41 and A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service to Under Secretary Chapman, Memorandum, June 23, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Paul R. Franke to Files, Memorandum, March 1, 1937.

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The two noncontributing elements of the district, *modern entrance kiosks*, are located at the eastern and western entrances to the park. The kiosks are very small buildings with large plate glass windows, which are situated in the middle of the roadway, and used by the monument staff to collect fees and dispense information. The kiosks were erected after the completion of the road. The western entrance kiosk has been moved.

Description of Associated Features

Rim Rock Drive's engineers were aware that they were building more than just an access road to get quickly from point to point. A major purpose of the road was to allow travelers scenic vistas and views of the magnificent geologic formations of the monument. The desire to build a spectacularly scenic route necessitated the inclusion of a number of special features in the design of the roadway. Today these features testify to the complex engineering involved in the road's construction and to the overall landscaping plan for the monument. The features include retaining walls, guard walls and rails, turnouts, culverts, drop inlets, drainage tunnels, and diversion ditches. This nomination describes representative examples of such feature types located along the roadway.

In several places along the roadway, *retaining walls* were necessary because the outer shoulder of the road was so close to the canyon rim. The walls were constructed by stone masons to hold fill along the cliff face and support the shoulder of the road. A variety of such walls, both dry and mortared, were designed to prevent visual monotony and represent the variety of the natural environment. Seven retaining walls, representing three different types, were counted during the preparation of this nomination. Some retaining walls are found under the rim of the canyon and are not readily visible from the roadway. At milepost 0.74 (1) is a dry-laid retaining wall composed of random coursed ashlar with projecting stones. The wall has a guard rail above it. The wall reflects the "naturalistic" or "rustic" style favored by monument planners, as exhibited in the random course, rough facing, and projecting stones.

A polygonal masonry retaining wall with guard rail above is found at milepost 2.52. (12) The wall is composed of deeply mortared, polygonally shaped, quarried stones. The wall varies in height to as much as eight feet above the ground. The top layer of stones appears more roughly faced than lower layers and is level. The design of the wall is unique for the monument, although a similar wall built at Crater Lake National Park was presented in the 1938 National Park Service publication, Barriers, Walls, and Fences.

At milepost 18.23 (34) an evenly coursed ashlar retaining wall was built. The formality of this wall was of a type discouraged by monument planners, who favored more primitive-appearing constructions for the terrain.

*Guard walls and rails* were constructed as safety features for automobiles along curves. As with retaining walls, a variety of styles was encouraged. Twenty-four guard rails or walls were counted during the preparation of this nomination. The majority of these were walls of large, roughly-quarried stone or boulders. At milepost 0.83, (2) is a "rustic" style guard wall consisting of large, roughly-quarried sandstone ledge rock and boulders

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of varied size set on horizontal axis and mortared into place. The mortared joints are of varied width, deeply raked. The wall measures approximately twelve inches high and twenty-three inches wide. This "rustic" or "naturalistic" style guard wall is the most common design found along the roadway; nineteen of the twenty-four walls observed are of this type. Although the exact plan of the walls is varied through the use of differing sizes of stone, the architectural style is the same, featuring roughly quarried slabs and boulders, deeply mortared. This was a popular style for National Park Service guard walls and similar features were built in Rocky Mountain National Park.

A polygonal masonry guard wall was constructed at milepost 2.52. (11) The guard wall is sixteen inches high and eighteen inches wide. This guard wall, which has an associated retaining wall below it, is of a design which is unique along the road, although other parks had similar walls constructed. New construction, utilizing rocks left over from 1930s quarrying, has been added on to the western end of this wall.

At milepost 4.80 (17) is a representative post and wire cable guard rail. The guard rail is composed of wood posts driven into the ground, attached with reflector disks, and strung with cable. Two guard rails of this type were observed along Rim Rock Drive. One of the more formally designed guard walls exists at milepost 6.15 (19). The parapet guard rail is composed of evenly coursed, quarry-faced ashlar. The wall is eighteen inches wide and varies in height from twenty-one to twenty-seven inches. This wall is unique along the road, although similar features were built in other parks.

At milepost 18.56 (35) is an unusual guard wall constructed of large, roughly quarried sandstone slabs with false masonry joints placed at angles to the horizontal axis. The purpose of the false joints is unknown, although they may have been created to lessen the appearance of rigid, straight lines of the real mortar joints. The false mortaring of this wall is unique along the road.

*Turnouts* were an integral part of the scenic roadway, permitting motorists to pause while viewing the geologic formations and natural vistas along Rim Rock Drive. Six historic turnouts were included in the original plan of the road and fourteen turnouts have been added subsequently. At milepost 1.00 (3) the first turnout along the road from the western entrance of the monument is encountered. Redlands View overlook is a modern turnout with concrete curbing and sidewalk. The vista from the turnout includes a distant view of the area known as the Redlands, the town of Fruita, and the Grand Valley. Some of the newer turnouts also have traffic islands and stone ledges or placed rocks defining parking and interpretive areas.

At milepost 3.46 (15), the first historic turnout is found. Distant View overlook is a turnout with rustic style curbing composed of large, quarry-faced sandstone slabs. The view from this turnout includes a magnificent view of the Grand Valley, the Book Cliffs, and Grand Mesa. Historic turnouts include the rustic style stonework exhibited by this overlook, which is displayed in such features as curbing, ledges, traffic islands, and sidewalks. For example, Highland View overlook at milepost 9.91 (28) features a rustic

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stone wall constructed of large, roughly faced stones; a sidewalk of flagstone; and a stone-edged traffic island. Red Canyon Overlook at milepost 16.05 (33) is an original turnout which features a more formal, evenly coursed ashlar ledge, stepped at intervals from two to three layers, and a traffic island with curbing composed of rippled sandstone.

Culverts proliferated in the design of the roadway as it became apparent that, although the region received an average of only 11.15 inches of rain per year, a sudden downpour could create major flooding problems and even wash out sections of the road. Today, approximately 210 culverts exist along Rim Rock Drive.

At milepost 1.73 (5) is a culvert headwall composed of random rubble, mortared into place, forming a segmental arch with radiating rubble voussoirs above the culvert pipe. The top of the wall is unevenly leveled. Above the mortared wall is evenly coursed, dry laid sandstone, which is topped by gravel and dirt and the surface of the road. The mortar is red colored and was originally stained with local mud. The corresponding headwall on the other side of the road is similar in design, but lacks the layer of dry-laid rock above the mortared section.

A culvert headwall has been rebuilt at milepost 7.03. (21) Originally the culvert wall had a rectangular opening. Now composed of evenly coursed, quarry-faced, mortared ashlar with metal culvert pipe visible from exterior.

A stone culvert reflecting the rustic style favored by monument planners is at milepost 8.83. (26) The headwall is composed of large, roughly-quarried, rectangular slabs of sandstone, mortared into place and forming a rectangular opening with flat slab lintel atop metal bar. The top of the wall is roughly level. The culvert has been lined with gunite. The opposite wall of the culvert also has a large, flat, stone lintel and stone slab walls.

A rustic culvert headwall, constructed of coursed, large sandstone slabs, roughly-faced and shaped to form a circular arch around the culvert pipe was built at milepost 10.53 (29). The headwall has one wing to hold fill visible and may have another hidden under dirt and vegetation. The metal culvert pipe has been replaced.

An unaltered, rustic culvert with headwall composed of roughly-faced, evenly coursed, large sandstone slabs shaped around a circular opening for the culvert pipe was built at milepost 11.98. (31) The wall is rectangular in shape, measuring approximately three feet high and five feet wide, and is one of the most frequently found designs along the road.

At milepost 21.22 (40) is a culvert with a headwall composed of gneiss rubble forming a circular opening around a metal culvert pipe. The top of the wall is roughly level. This culvert represents the type constructed in the No Thoroughfare Canyon section during the latter part of the road project and reflects the change in rock type found along the roadway and the later construction date. The wall measures approximately two-and-a-half by five feet.

(X) See continuation sheet

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*Drop Inlets* were constructed along Rim Rock Drive to confine and direct the flow of water away from the road. Drop inlets could be as simple as a hole blasted into the solid rock could or have associated stone or concrete walls. Four representative drop inlets were examined during the preparation of this nomination. A drop inlet outside of east entrance to Tunnel No. 2 at milepost 2.35 (9) is of the type also known as a "coyote hole." The feature consists of a circular shaft excavated about twenty feet down into solid rock connected to a tunnel blasted underneath the roadway to the canyon. The rock ledge has been topped with a fence for safety.

At milepost 8.43 (25) is a drop inlet with square concrete base opening surrounded on three sides by mortared walls of evenly coursed, quarry-faced ashlar. Side walls are tapered toward front. The hole in the rock is circular and the drop is fifteen to twenty feet. A grate has been placed over the opening for safety.

At milepost 9.33 (27) is a drop inlet with square opening of concrete blocks, which are atop concrete pillars twelve feet tall. The drop is about thirty-five feet. The pillars are modern additions and the walls have been gunite lined.

At milepost 11.63 (30) is a drop inlet with a rectangular opening faced on three sides with evenly coursed, mortared, quarry-faced stone. The vertical drop is ten to twelve feet.

Large *drainage tunnels* were built to prevent large volumes of water from washing out portions of the road. Two representative drainage tunnels were examined as part of this nomination. At milepost 2.83 (13) is a tunnel excavated into solid rock. The tunnel has an opening approximately five-and-a-half by six feet wide and has a solid rock floor. The tunnel curves and comes out on the other side of the road. Another tunnel is located at milepost 15.94 (32). This tunnel, probably the largest along the roadway, has a square opening excavated into solid rock. Above the tunnel opening is an excavated rock wall. One side of entrance consists of rock cliff and the other is a stepped, mortared wall of evenly coursed, smooth and roughly-faced stone. Graffiti on the wall gives a construction date of June 1937.

*Diversion ditches* were another means of channeling water away from the surface of the road. Five large diversion ditches were built, the largest of which is 1,400 feet long. Two representative diversion ditches were examined as part of this nomination. At milepost 3.23 (14) is a diversion ditch with rock floor and sides lined with unmortared rubble. The ditch is approximately two hundred feet long, two to three feet wide, and stretches diagonally from the road, spilling off the cliff. At milepost 7.64 (23) is a diversion ditch cut through rock, with a stone floor and mortared rubble sides. The ditch is approximately 450 feet long and five feet wide. In addition to the formal diversion ditches, the shoulders of many parts of the road were designed to channel away from the road surface. Many of these areas have been asphalt paved.



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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:        ( ) nationally    ( ) statewide    (X) locally  
Applicable National Register Criteria    (X) A ( ) B (X) C ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)    ( ) A ( ) B ( ) C ( ) D ( ) E ( ) F ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

**Period of Significance****Significant Dates**

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Transportation

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1931-1950

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1931; 1937; 1942;

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Engineering

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1950

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Landscape Architecture

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Social History

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Entertainment/Recreation**Cultural Affiliation**

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Conservation

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N/A**Significant Person****Architect/Builder**

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N/A

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National Park Service

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**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

Rim Rock Drive Historic District is significant under criterion A for its representation of the second stage in the improvement of automobile access to and development of Colorado National Monument. The construction of the 22.42 mile long road from the west to east entrances in the monument comprised a scenic loop, accessible from U. S. Highways 6 and 50 and, later, Interstate 70. The road permitted visitors, approaching from either the east or the west, to plan a visit through the entire length of the monument and continue on their journey. Rim Rock Drive is also significant to the monument's development because it represented the first modern road in the monument, the construction of which enhanced the recreational attraction of the area and stimulated tourism. Rim Rock Drive eliminated the use of Serpents Trail, the early twentieth century road, as an entryway into the park. Serpents Trail was a narrow roadway which challenged the abilities of both car and driver. Serpents Trail did not meet highway standards and drivers' expectations by the time it was replaced, and may have deterred tourism to the area. Improved access to the monument also increased the number of visitors able to view the natural wonders therein and to appreciate the value of their conservation.

Rim Rock Drive is also significant under criterion A because it represented the major source of construction employment in the Grand Junction area during the Depression and had a substantial impact on the economy of the area.<sup>5</sup> Direct purchases of construction materials and camp supplies for the road project, as well as indirect spending by workers, helped the region during the economic crisis. Project Engineer Secrest noted that at one point in the early 1930s more than 800 men were working on building of Rim Rock Drive, reflecting the project's Depression-era role in relieving unemployment.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, which pushed the scenic highway concept for more than

(X) See continuation sheet

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<sup>5</sup> T. W. Secrest, "Final Construction Report, Scenic Rim Rock Road, Stations 430+00 to 540+00--Section 1A, Account No. 4X436.1," July 12, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> T. W. Secrest, "Final Construction Report on Scenic Rim Rock Road, Stations 210+00 to 370+00," Section 1-B, Account F. P. 95.8, March 15, 1937.

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20 years, viewed successful completion of Rim Rock Drive and better auto access to Colorado National Monument as integral to the area's tourism industry. Thus, the road was also significant to the overall planning and development of Grand Junction and the surrounding area and reflected early twentieth century town boosterism.

Rim Rock Drive is also significant for its association with Depression-era public works projects. The workforce for the construction of Rim Rock Drive consisted of workers supplied by a variety of Depression-era public works relief agencies, as well as individuals directly hired by the National Parks Service through its Roads and Trails program. The major entities involved with the project for the 1935-42 period were the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and Roads and Trails. The No Thoroughfare Canyon segment was completed by Roads and Trails during 1949-50. A number of observers described the road project as "one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by the CCC in Colorado" and "one of the most impressive legacies of the CCC in western Colorado."<sup>7</sup>

Rim Rock Drive is significant under criterion C for its engineering characteristics. The district is significant for its representation of cliff-face roadbuilding in a unique terrain. Intensive applications of manual labor, rather than heavy machinery, were employed in the construction of the road. The path of the road ran through solid rock for most of its length, requiring drilling, blasting, and removal of the shattered rock. A good deal of sledgehammer and pick work was involved and a substantial amount of material was removed by hand or pulled by horses using small dump carts on rails. Three tunnels, the largest of which was more than five hundred feet in length, were excavated through solid rock. The roadwork required extensive planning and complicated engineering, especially that portion through rugged No Thoroughfare Canyon.

Because the road was intended as a scenic highway, extra engineering considerations were involved in selecting the route and the final design hugged the canyon rims and incorporated switchbacks which facilitated the climb in elevation while providing motorists with panoramic views of the natural setting. To fulfill its role as a scenic highway, the road followed the rim of the mesa, following the winding curves of the canyons to permit views of the depths. The road was consistently described in work orders and reports as the "Scenic Rim Rock Road." Landscape Architect Howard W. Baker, who had hiked the canyons and mesas of the monument during his 1931 visit, observed that "a view from the rim gives one a much better idea of the different formations, the varied shapes which one monolith can take, and the varied colors of the sandstone and granite canyons."<sup>8</sup>

(X) See continuation sheet

<sup>7</sup> McCarthy, "History of the CCC in Colorado," in Lyons, 1930 Employment 1980 (Denver: Colorado Division of Employment and Training, 1981), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Howard W. Baker, "Report on Road Location Through Colorado National Monument," December 12, 1931.

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The road is also significant under criterion C for its representation of the "naturalistic" or "rustic" style of landscape architecture developed by the National Park Service for projects within its properties during the Depression. The rugged terrain of the canyons required many special engineering features, including three tunnels, as well as retaining walls, guard walls, culverts, and diversion ditches. Under the direction of a resident landscape architect, the structures and associated features were designed with materials and landscaping which harmonized as much as possible with the natural environment and detracted little from the natural scenery. Native materials were utilized whenever possible and their size and quantity reflected those found in the local terrain. A variety of rustic styles of guard rails, retaining walls, and culvert headwalls were constructed to reflect the variety found in nature. The materials were roughly processed and natural colors were emphasized in construction so that the structures would appear to be indigenous to the region.

This nomination is a part of the "Colorado National Monument Multiple Property Submission." The Rim Rock Drive Historic District is associated with the historic context "Development of Automobile Routes and Access, 1911-1950." The four structures in the Rim Rock Drive historic district were constructed during the period 1931-1950 and are associated with the historic context mentioned above. The two buildings within the district were constructed at a later date. Specific details of Rim Rock Drive's construction are provided in the cover form.

The resources within the district maintain a high degree of integrity in terms of location and setting, and the scenic views incorporated into the design of the roadway have not been compromised. Most of the roadway retains the integrity of its as-built condition. The original materials used in constructing the structures and associated features of the district still predominate, including roughly-quarried stone and native boulders and much of the original design of retaining walls, turnouts, guard walls, tunnels, ditches, and headwalls is still extant. Although some features have been remortared due to natural deterioration, most display original craftsmanship and design, and their restoration does not affect the integrity of the district.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Booth, Col. Harold R. Interview. Grand Junction, Colorado. February 20, 1980.

Gleyre, L. A. and Alleger, C. N., comp. History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado. Denver: Western Newspaper Union Press, 1936.

(X) See continuation sheet

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- (X) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # CO-29

Primary location of additional data:  
( ) State Historic Preservation Office  
( ) Other State agency  
(X) Federal agency  
( ) Local government  
( ) University  
( ) Other  
Specify Repository:  
NPS, Rocky Mountain Regional Office

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of property: 786.8 acres

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### UTM References

A 1|2 6|9|6|1|4|0| 4|3|3|2|4|0|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

B 1|2 6|9|5|5|2|0| 4|3|2|9|5|7|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

C 1|2 6|9|7|6|9|0| 4|3|2|8|2|5|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

D 1|2 6|9|5|5|0|0| 4|3|2|5|2|3|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

(X) See continuation sheet

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The Rim Rock Drive Historic District is a narrow, linear area, generally described in feet from the centerline of Rim Rock Drive. Beginning at the western (Fruita) entrance at the boundary to Colorado National Monument, the boundary of the Rim Rock

(X) See continuation sheet

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### Boundary Justification

The boundary was established to include the roadway of Rim Rock Drive as well as its associated features. The latter include guard and retaining walls, overlooks,

(X) See continuation sheet

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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Street & number 12795 W. Alameda Parkway (RMRO) Telephone (303) 969-2878  
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UTM References (Con't.)

E 1 2	6 9 8 7 2 0	4 3 2 1 6 0 0	F 1 2	7 0 5 1 7 0	4 3 2 3 2 4 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Con't.)

Drive Historic District extends fifty feet on either side of the centerline of Rim Rock Drive from Milepost 0.00 to 0.25. All milepost references are from the western, Fruita boundary of Colorado National Monument. From Milepost 0.25 to 4.00, the boundary expands to extend 150 feet on either side of the centerline of Rim Rock Drive. From Mileposts 4.00 to 4.50 the boundary contracts to extend fifty feet on either side of the centerline of Rim Rock Drive. From Mileposts 4.50 to 22.00 the boundary again expands to extend 150 feet on either side of the centerline of Rim Rock Drive, except for Mileposts 19.77 to 19.78 where the boundary on the eastern side of the road contracts to thirty feet on that side of the side of the centerline. The boundary contracts again from Milepost 22.00 to Milepost 22.42 at the eastern, Grand Junction entrance and boundary of Colorado National Monument. In addition to the boundary as described above, at Milepost 7.64 on the west side of the road the boundary extends approximately five hundred feet beyond the 150 foot limit to follow ten feet on either side of the centerline of a diversion ditch. Similarly, at Milepost 19.14 on the north side of the road the boundary extends approximately one hundred feet and on the south side nine hundred feet beyond the 150 foot limit to follow ten feet on either side of the centerline of a diversion ditch.

Boundary Justification (Con't.)

culverts, drop inlets, diversion ditches, turnouts, and drainage tunnels. The Chief of Maintenance at Colorado National Monument indicated that a boundary of 150 feet on either side of the centerline was adequate to encompass all associated features with the exception of a few long diversion ditches. In two instances it was necessary to extend the boundary further outward to include such diversion ditches. The boundary was contracted at the west and east entrances and in the vicinity of the Visitors Center in order to exclude non-contributing ranger residences and other modern buildings from the district. At the upper trailhead of Serpents Trail at Milepost 19.77, the eastern boundary of the road was contracted in order to prevent an overlap between the Rim Rock Drive Historic District and Serpents Trail, which is being individually nominated.