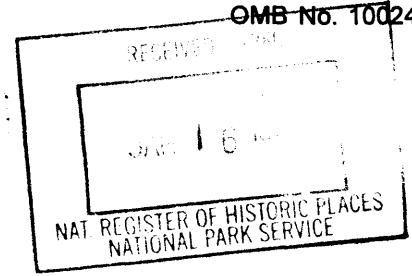


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Land's End Observatory

other names/site number Land's End Shelter House; Land's End Visitor Center; 5ME4936

### 2. Location

street & number 10 miles west of SH65 on Land's End Road (Forest Rd 100) [N/A] not for publication

city or town Whitewater [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Mesa code 077 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Evan J. DeStasio Federal Preservation Officer 1/6/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

USDA Forest Service  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

James Edward Hartman State Historic Preservation Officer July 19, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
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  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper	Date
<u>Bill Roland</u>	<u>2/28/97</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Land's End Observatory  
Name of Property

Mesa County, Colo.  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century  
American Movements  
Other: Rustic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Stone  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Shingle  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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**Narrative Description**

The Land's End Observatory, also known as the Land's End Shelter House, Land's End Visitor Center, or Land's End Concession Building, is perched on the edge of the south side of Grand Mesa, at the top of the narrow switch-backed Land's End Road (Forest Road 100). The road connects the lowlands of the Gunnison River Valley to the mesa top. The observatory building, latrine and rock wall were constructed in 1936-37, after completion of the Land's End Road. Visitors were then able to access the west side of the mesa and could enjoy the magnificent vista from the observatory: a panoramic view of the Gunnison and Grand River Valleys, the Uncompahgre Plateau, the San Juan Mountains, and the La Sal Mountains in Utah.

Overseen by Ivan Anderson, a local stonemason, the buildings were built by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) labor, with some assistance from two Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) side camps. The observatory building is of the Rustic style as developed and interpreted by the USFS. The observatory is a one-story, slightly irregular T-shaped building measuring 43'5" by 33', with roughcut, rockfaced, uncoursed stone walls of native basalt. Log sills above the stone support vertical logs in the gable ends. Diagonal logs form the upper gable ends on the north and south. The roof consists of moderately pitched cross gables with log rafters and purlins. Pointed rafter ends are visible beneath the eaves. Pointed purlin ends support external rafter logs across the face of the gable ends. Sawn wood shingles are probably original and may be of the high quality "Royal" variety (Ralph Hartley, personal communication). A basalt chimney straddles the west gable ridge. The chimney has one sloped step-back just below its concrete cap. A decorative iron "S" is attached to the west face of the chimney.

All the windows have poured concrete sills and massive wood lintels. Flanking the south entrance on the west side is a single casement diamond pane window. One set of four, 8-light casement windows is set in the south side of the exhibit room (visitor reception room). A 6-light window illuminates the entry area on the west elevation. In the observation room (living room), large single-light picture windows fill the north, west and south elevations and are each flanked by 8-light casement windows. In addition to the observation room windows, the north side contains one double 8-light casement window, one double 6-light casement window, and two 4-light casement windows. The east side contains two 8-light double casement windows. Tall, rectangular windows in the north and south gable ends are covered by wood panels.

An original, unglazed, vertical plank door on the north side provides access to the kitchen. The south (main) entrance contains a solid wood door with a one-foot square light.

The foundation is a concrete slab with a floor of irregular coursed flagstone. A stoop of two semi-circular flagstones with sandstone steps leads to the south entrance. A stone bench surrounds the outside wall of the observation room and a flagstone walk links the building to the parking lot, rim wall, and the latrine south of the observatory.

The interior of the building is divided into an entryway, exhibit room (visitor reception room), observation room (living room), and an "apartment" which consists of a small kitchen area and bedroom. The north wall of the entry is exposed basalt, as are portions of the walls in the observation

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

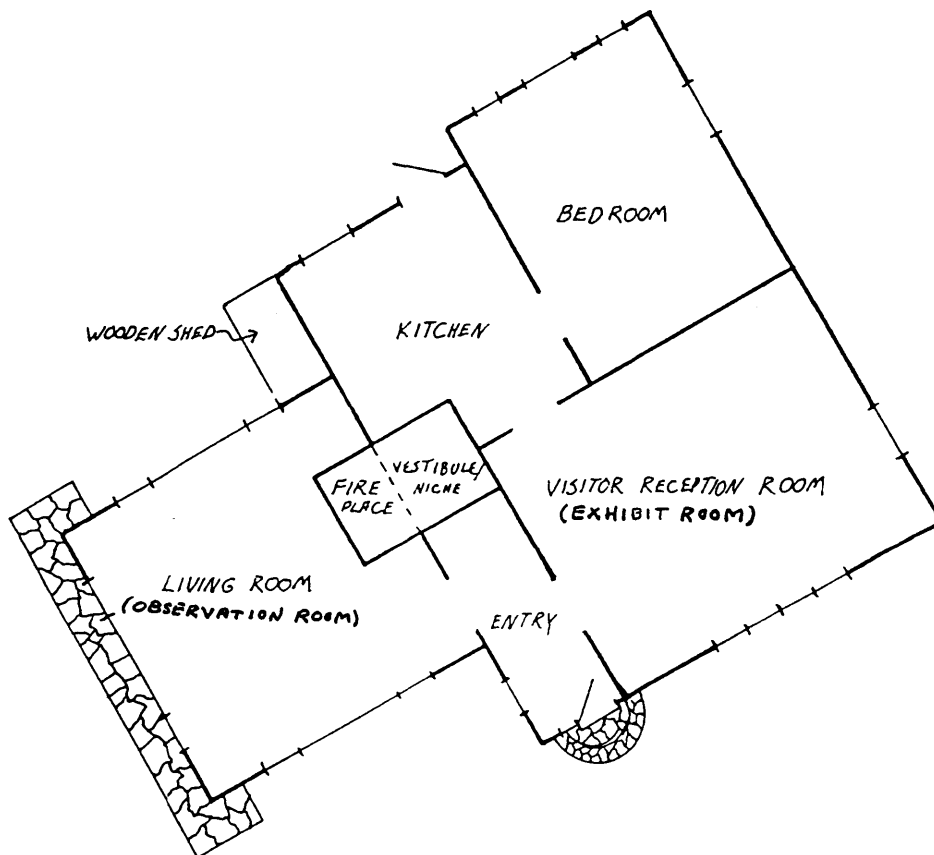
Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 2

Land's End Observatory  
Observatory Floor Plan

KEY:

- |— = WINDOW
- - = INTERIOR DOORWAY
- /— = EXTERIOR DOORWAY
- XXXX = SPLIT FIELDSTONE PATIO



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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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room and exhibit room. Tongue-and-groove pine boards cover most of the non-stone interior walls. The kitchen is panelled with particle board and the bedroom walls are covered with inexpensive wood paneling. The ceilings consist of exposed log beams supporting four inch wide tongue-and-groove pine boards. The ceiling in the observation room is a truncated triangular arch. Concessionaires lived in the apartment during the summers in the 1940s and 1950s. Forest Service personnel managed the facility as a visitor center intermittently since then but have not stayed in the apartment, probably due to the lack of water.

Modifications to the Land's End Observatory include exterior door replacement and the possible concrete infill of interior wall niches. Paneling of the apartment rooms probably occurred in the 1950s. A small, shed-roofed plywood generator room was added at the intersection of the kitchen and observation room walls. It was not indicated on a 1968 area plan map and may have been constructed post-1968.

The rim wall is made of uncoursed, uncut local basalt and follows the precipitous rim roughly 150 yards from the latrine to a point north of the observatory. Chipmunks abound on the wall in the summer, lured by visitors' junk food. A 4-foot high pylon of uncut basalt is centered on the terrace between the observatory and the mesa edge. At one time, a metal sighting dial sat atop the pylon, pointing to various topographic features. The dial was removed or stolen, perhaps during the 1960s.

The eight seat latrine is a rectangular plan, 24'8" by 12'6", side gabled building sitting below the plane of the mesa. Steps lead from the flagstone path to the separate entrances (mens and ladies). Built at the same time as the observatory, the architecture is similar but on a smaller scale. The latrine repeats the rock walls and vertical log gables found in the observatory. A small gabled vent tops the wood shingled roof. Double, 4-light, fixed windows provide illumination on each elevation. Vertical wood plank doors provide access on the north and south elevations. The foundation is a concrete slab. Sewage reportedly is deposited in the mass of basalt rock below which serves as a natural septic system. The latrine remains in use.

The observatory and latrine are in remarkably good condition considering their age and lack of scheduled maintenance. Water stains on the ceiling of the observatory indicate a leak in the roof and USFS engineers are urging roof replacement. The buildings and associated rim wall retain sufficient integrity to convey their significant historical and architectural associations.

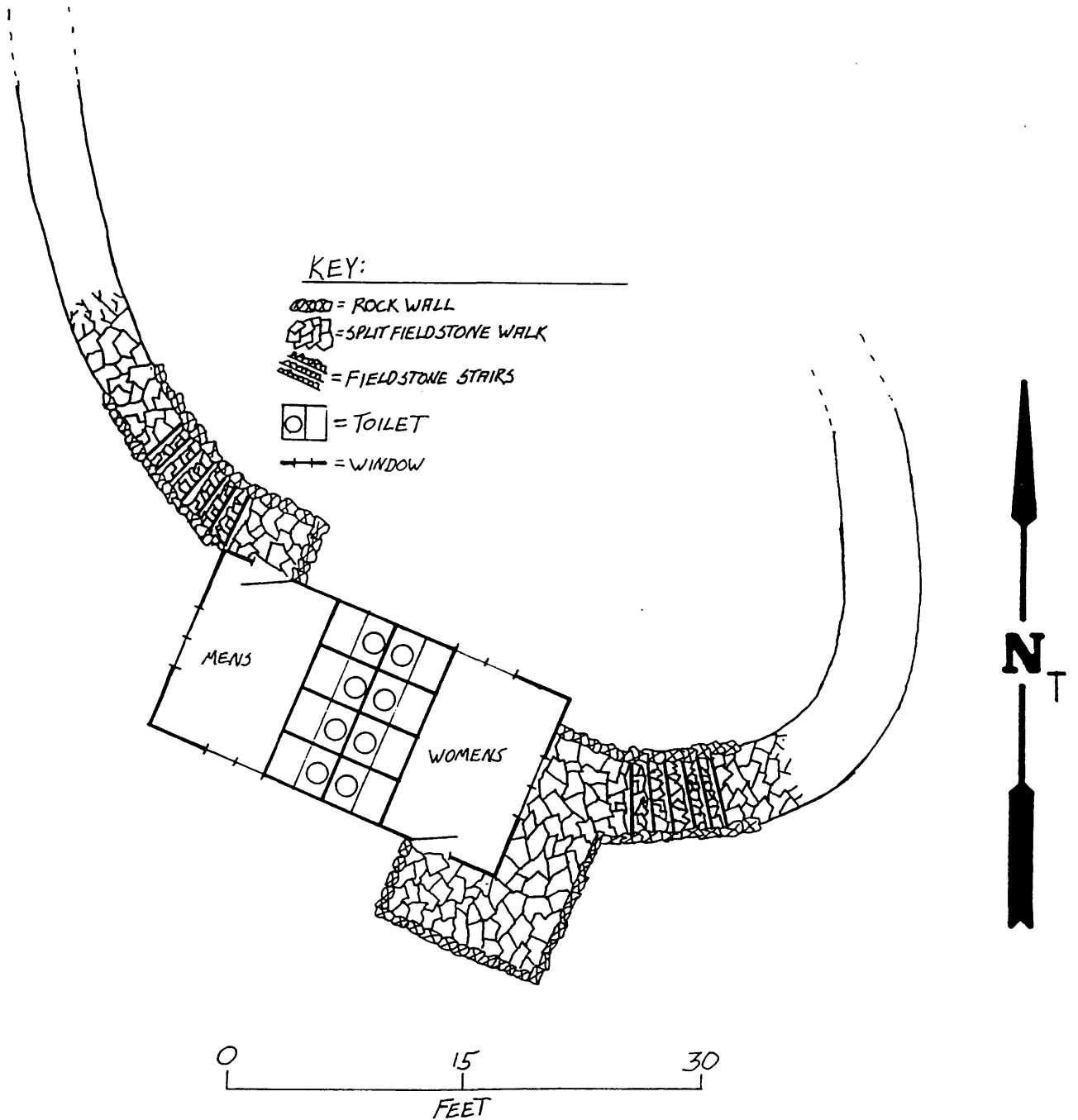
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

Land's End Observatory  
Latrine Floor Plan



Land's End Observatory  
Name of Property

Mesa County, Colo.  
County/State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Social History

**Periods of Significance**

1936 - 1955

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

US Forest Service

Works Progress Administration

Anderson, Ivan

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

National Park Service  
Midwest Archaeological Center

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 5

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**Statement of Significance**

The Land's End Observatory is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment and recreation, and social history. The buildings are associated with the federal government's response to the Great Depression of the 1930s and the recreational development of Region 2 of the U.S. Forest Service. The buildings are also eligible under Criterion C for their architectural significance as important examples of the Rustic style as employed by the Forest Service in Colorado.

The Land's End Observatory represents the expansion of the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) mission from basic custodianship, which it practiced at its inception, to extensive resource management, including the recreational development of its lands. With the completion of the Land's End Road, the observatory provided an opportunity for travelers to the Grand Mesa to experience the scenic beauty of the National Forest and surrounding topography. Concessionaires lived in the observatory during the summers in the 1940s and 1950s, selling sandwiches and film, hauling water, maintaining a primitive phone line, and managing the Wild Rose Campground/Picnic Area on the Land's End Road. The apartment has not been modified since the last occupancy in the 1950s. Forest Service personnel have sold books and managed the facility as a visitor center intermittently since then, but have not stayed in the apartment, probably due to the lack of water.

Prior to the 1930s, USFS buildings reflected the preferences of the rangers who built them, as well as the tools, materials, and amount of time available to them. With the development of regional and national engineering divisions, USFS design became more standardized. The use of commercially available materials was specified, and the designs were stylistically reflective of various local and national architectural trends.

The 1930s depression provided the catalyst for two developments which greatly influenced the number, type, and style of USFS buildings. The first development was the creation of the Region 2 Architectural Division in 1936. Region 2 consisted of Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming. This organization oversaw an era of unprecedented architectural improvements. Designs from this period were characterized by their rustic appearance and labor-intensive composition. They expressed such USFS ideals as simplicity, harmony with nature, and the use of natural materials.

Architectural consultant, Albert H. Good, in his book, Park and Recreation Structures, helped coin the architectural term, "Rustic style". Writing in 1938, he described the most common type of architectural design used in state and national parks during the 1930s. The entire concept behind Rustic architecture was the achievement of a primitive, rugged, and handcrafted look. A style which:

through the use of native materials in proper scale, and through the avoidance of severely straight lines and over-sophistication, gives the feeling of having been executed by pioneer craftsmen with limited hand tools. It thus achieves sympathy with natural surroundings and with the past. In high, mountainous and forested regions the various structural elements of rustic construction--logs, timbers, rocks--must be reasonably overscaled to the structure itself to avoid being unreasonably underscaled to surrounding large trees and rough terrain. (Good, 1938)



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Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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The Land's End Observatory is one of the finest examples of the Rocky Mountain region's Rustic style architecture. The observatory, latrine and rim wall all display the major characteristics of the style as defined by Good. Each is composed of native materials roughly finished to harmonize with their natural surroundings. Though the observatory building contains more windows than typically found in pioneer cabins, the use of small paned, multi-light windows correspond to traditional late 19th century cabin construction. Even the large picture windows in the observation room are rusticated by the flanking multi-light casements. The only modifications to the exterior have been the door replacements and the addition of a small generator room. On the interior of the observatory, the apartment was modified in the 1950s, but few, if any modifications have occurred since then. The observatory has been in continuous use since its construction and is the most visited historic structure on Grand Mesa.

At a time when Region 2 architectural designs for such buildings as the observatory were achieving a stylistic unity, the Great Depression provided mechanisms to turn paper plans into solid buildings. Federal responses to the socio-economic impacts of the depression resulted in the formation of a set of agencies responsible for the implementation of the New Deal programs of the Roosevelt administration. Two of these programs, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) played an important role in improving the natural resources and human facilities in America's public parks and forests.

The CCC sought to provide useful employment for the nation's growing ranks of unemployed young men. The thousands of park, forest conservation, and reclamation projects performed by the CCC not only created much needed employment for millions of unemployed single young men, the program also contributed to their education and the development of job skills. The education and training CCC participants received improved their literacy and produced skilled technicians in a number of fields. It prepared the young men for future work in the military, in factories, and on farms.

The WPA was a diverse New Deal agency designed to employ people in worthwhile, modest scale urban and rural public works projects. While the CCC concentrated on hiring young men, the WPA hired adults in both skilled and unskilled occupations. The WPA often worked jointly on projects with other federal or state agencies. They participated on road, water, sewer, and other building projects that occasionally dovetailed with conservation and park projects performed by the CCC. In some cases, the WPA actually completed projects begun by the CCC.

Construction of the observatory followed the general scenario for Depression-era, CCC/WPA projects (Robb, 1995). The Forest Service provided the overall design and oversight for the Land's End Road and observatory construction. The full extent of CCC involvement in the project is not known. Available information indicates that the CCC cleared the road right-of-way and may have constructed a small portion of the lower (western) part of the road itself. The WPA took over construction in 1934 and completed the road to the mesa top in 1935. USFS and WPA laborers began construction at the observatory site the following year. The observatory building, latrine and rim wall were completed by 1937.

The Land's End Observatory was a part of the campaign of natural resource enhancement undertaken by the Forest Service through its own design efforts in concert with the manpower pool

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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made available by the WPA and CCC. The Rustic style of the buildings draws heavily from their natural context, adding to rather than detracting from, the natural beauty of their setting.

The period of significance is considered to be 1936-1955. The period begins with the start of site construction and continues through the period of the observatory's most intensive use, the time when concessionaires consistently occupied the building during the summer seasons. The property is eligible under Criteria Consideration G because contexts exists to evaluate its significance, the majority of the period of significance is over 50 years of age, and the activities within the less than 50 year old segment constitute a continuation of the original use.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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**Bibliographic References**

- Centuries Research, Inc. *Evaluation of Historic Forest Service Properties on the Grand Mesa National Forest: 1981*. 1981. On file in GMUG National Forest Supervisor's Office, Delta, Colo.
- Civilian Conservation Corps Operational Records*. 1934-1942. National Archives, Denver, Colo.
- Crum, Sally. *A Cultural Resource Inventory of the Land's End Trail, Grand Mesa National Forest, Mesa County, Colorado*. 1993. On file in GMUG National Forest Supervisor's Office, Delta, Colo.
- Grand Mesa Forest History: Grand Junction District*. Undated. On file in GMUG National Forest Supervisor's Office, Delta, Colo.
- Graves, Henry S. *Report of the Forester for 1911*. 1912. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.
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- Hutton, A., Regional Forest Inspector. Inspection Memorandum, Mesa Lakes R.S. Memorandum dated 8/3/1940. Acc'n # 52-1-77, Box 3. National Archives, Denver, Colo.
- Improvement Inventory, Region 2 Engineering Record*. On file in the Engineering Division, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Denver, Colo.
- Johnson, F.R. Inspection Memorandum, Lands End. Memorandum dated 8/23/1934. Acc'n # 52-A-77, Box 3. National Archives, Denver, Colo.
- Kulkosky, Tanya. *Pueblo Mountain Park National Register Nomination*. 1994. On file at the Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colo.
- Lands End Recreation Unit. Forest Service Records. On file in GMUG National Forest Supervisor's Office, Delta, Colo.
- Marshall, Muriel. "Sky Island-Land's End Ladder." *Delta County Independent*, Delta, Colorado. October 26, 1986. Copy on file at GMUG National Forest, Collbran District, Collbran, Colo.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 & 10 Page 9

Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

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Mahls, Steven F. *Colorado Mountains Historic Context*. 1984. State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Colo.

Robb, Nate. Interviewed by Sally Crum, USFS, on August 10, 1995 at 2847 Newport Circle, Grand Junction, Colo.

Regional historic photographs. On file at Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Denver, Colo.

**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nomination boundary for the Land's End Observatory is shown on the accompanying map entitled, *Site Sketch Map of Land's End Observatory*. The boundary is shown by the flagged line on the north, east and south, with the mesa rim, largely defined by the stone rim wall, forming the boundary on the west.

**Boundary Justification**

Visitor activity has historically been confined within the limits of the above area. A short nature trail, constructed in 1994, extends north of the rock wall but is not considered a contributing feature of the site because of its recent age and limited use.

Land's End Observatory  
Name of Property

Mesa County, Colo.  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.7

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 12 740360 4323030  
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Crum, Zone Archaeologist

organization Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison Nat'l. Forest date April 12, 1996

street & number PO Box 330 telephone 970-487-3534

city or town Collbran state CO zip code 81624

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name USDA Forest Service; Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison National Forest

street & number 2250 Highway 50 telephone 970-874-7691

city or town Delta state CO zip code 81416

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

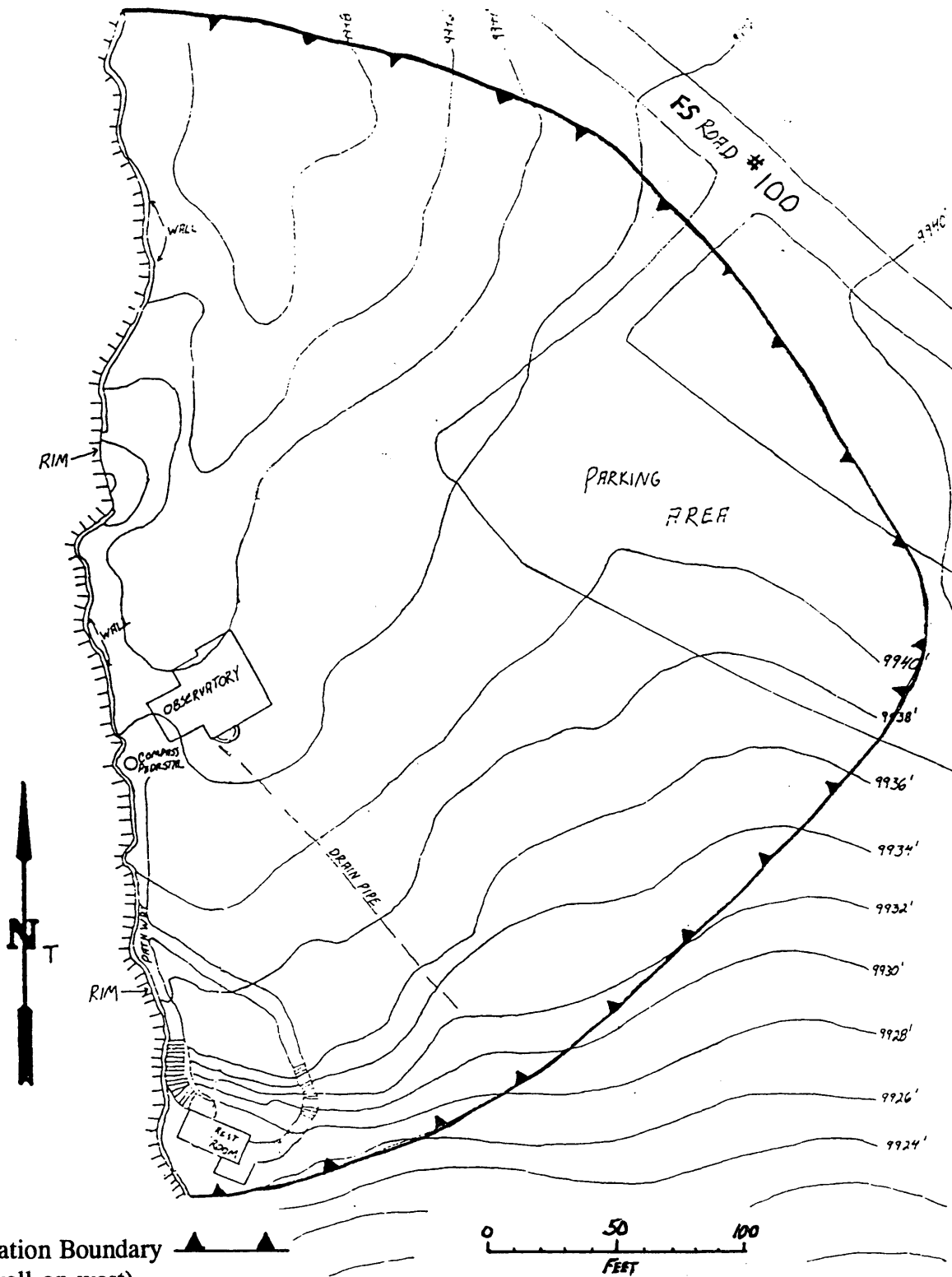
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Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 10

Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

Site Sketch Map of Land's End Observatory



Nomination Boundary  
(Rim wall on west)

MAP DERIVED FROM FOREST SERVICE SITE PLAN AND 1989 AERIAL PHOTOS

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 11

Land's End Observatory  
Mesa County, Colorado

USGS Topographic Map  
Lands End, Colo.  
7.5 Minute Quad  
1962

