

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 determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Harmon Park's Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails Swale

Other names/site number Harmon Park Swale (preferred name); Prairie Village Swale; KHRI #091-3444

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail

## 2. Location

Street & number Austin Harmon Park, 7700 Mission Road   not for publication

City or town Prairie Village   vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Johnson Code 091 Zip code 66208

## 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

x national    statewide    local Applicable National Register Criteria: x A    B    C    x D

Patrick Zollner 8-6-18  
Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register    determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register    removed from the National Register

   other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Alyssa [Signature] 9/21/18  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

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

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

LANDSCAPE/park  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
walls: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other: Earth  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary

The Harmon Park Swale is located within a predominately residential portion of Prairie Village, Johnson County, eastern Kansas (SE¼, SE¼ Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East).<sup>1</sup> This city park's single swale is situated along the combined route of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails as it headed southwest out of Westport, Missouri (approximately five miles to the northeast) to present-day Gardner, Kansas (approximately 25 miles to the southwest) where the Santa Fe Trail split-off from the Oregon and California trail. The Harmon Park Swale is one of the few intact trail remains in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area, as urban and suburban development has greatly encroached upon the trail in this region. The nominated 0.57-acre site is an urban example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the revised *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* multiple property nomination.

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### Elaboration

#### *General Landscape<sup>2</sup>*

Harmon Park is located within the Attenuated Drift Border division of the Dissected Till Plains section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains division of North America.<sup>3</sup> The Dissected Till Plains is a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains that covers all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Most of the Dissected Till Plains is taken up by a glaciated area known as the Kansas Drift Plain. The less heavily glaciated Attenuated Drift Border lies along the southern and western periphery of the Dissected Till Plains in a 25-35 mile wide strip roughly marked by the Kansas, Big Blue, and Little Blue rivers. Bedrock in the western part of the Dissected Till Plains consists of sedimentary formations of Permian age, while bedrock formations throughout the rest of the area are of Pennsylvanian age. The formations are made up of interstratified beds of limestone, shale, and sandstone, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thicknesses. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to a hundred feet in the bluffs along the Missouri river. The loess thins rapidly away from the river.

The topography of the region is directly related to the degree of glaciation. The heavily glaciated Kansas Drift Plain has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface, while the lightly glaciated Attenuated Drift Border is more rugged, with an erosional rock-controlled surface similar in most respects to that of the Osage Plains. Unlike the latter, which was never glaciated, the Attenuated Drift Border is covered by isolated patches of glacial till and outwash along with scattered boulders, cobbles, and pebbles of ice-transported materials, including quartzites, granites, and diorites brought in from locations well to the north of the state. The resultant topography is less bold than that of the Osage Plains but decidedly rougher and of greater relief than the Kansas Drift Plain.

Judging from early historical accounts and soil survey data, the vegetation of northeast Kansas at the time of initial white settlement consisted almost entirely of prairie cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine forest. The natural vegetation of most of the area was tall grass prairie consisting of dense stands of big and little bluestem. The prairie was cut through by riverine forest vegetation consisting of broadleaf deciduous forests often containing dense undergrowth and many vines, occasionally interrupted by freshwater marshes. Hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm were the dominant forest species;<sup>4</sup> although oak, black walnut, linden, sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as

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<sup>1</sup> A swale is a linear depression in the ground surface, often deep enough to have sloping sides. A swale is not an individual wheel track; rather, it is a broad depression created by large numbers of animal-drawn conveyances.

<sup>2</sup> The following three paragraphs are adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

<sup>3</sup> W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 291.

<sup>4</sup> A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 600-601.

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Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and wild grape.<sup>5</sup> Prairie vegetation covered the uplands in all but the eastern edge of the Dissected Till Plains, where forested conditions prevailed. The natural vegetation of that area consisted of medium tall multilayered broadleaf deciduous forest, with various forms of hickory and oak being the dominant species.<sup>6</sup> The forest was most pervasive on the bluffs along the Missouri river. To the west, the forest/prairie transition was marked by a "mosaic" situation in which forests with islands of prairie gradually changed westward into prairie with islands of forest,<sup>7</sup> and finally into prairie with little or no upland forest vegetation.

### *Landscape of the Nominated Site*

Harmon Park is located within a predominately suburban residential neighborhood (*Figure 1*). The nominated 0.57-acre site is surrounded by commercial development adjacent to the south and east, Delmar Street to the west, and park amenities to the north and Shawnee Mission East High School's campus. The City of Prairie Village, who owns and maintains the park, has constructed a sidewalk and interpretive kiosk overlooking the swale to the north. The landscape immediately surrounding the swale is mostly mown grass with a few deciduous trees. In order to accentuate the swale's boundaries, two parallel rows of trees were planted along the edges of the swale.

### *Trail Segment*

The Harmon Park swale is an example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the revised multiple property nomination. This single swale is oriented northeast-southwest and remains at an elevation of approximately 314 meters (1030 feet) (*Figure 2*). The swale is approximately 43 meters (141 feet) long by 7 meters (23 feet) wide (*Figures 3 & 4*).

Aerial photography shows the park area clearly, along with the distinctive sidewalk and interpretive kiosk. The swale, however, can only be seen by reference to those features and by looking for the two parallel rows of trees (*Figure 3*). While LiDAR images suggest a rather extensive swale, the feature is only visible on the ground near the interpretive kiosk. LiDAR (Light Distance and Ranging) imagery of Harmon Park shows not only the distinctive sidewalk and interpretive kiosk, but also the swale, clearly visible in a northeast-southwest orientation (*Figure 5*).<sup>8</sup> While there are other intriguing linear features visible on the image, none can be confidently followed on the ground. For that matter, the swale appears to be smaller on the ground than it does on the LiDAR image.

### *Integrity*

The Harmon Park Swale site, which is now part of a public park, retains a good degree of integrity. Although surrounded by suburban development (thus affecting its integrity of setting), the swale's location within a city park has enabled it to be somewhat celebrated and preserved throughout the years. The swale is accessible to the public, who are able to walk within the swale to tangibly appreciate the extant resource. The swale retains a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, and association required for registration.

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<sup>5</sup> Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 14.

<sup>6</sup> Kuchler, 599.

<sup>7</sup> Kuchler, 588.

<sup>8</sup> LiDAR can be an excellent tool for locating and/or defining the extent of subtle trail remnants. Such images are produced with systematic laser aerial data acquisition. The greatest advantage of LiDAR is its ability to see through vegetation and to produce shaded images that enhance subtle features on the ground.



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**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

- Transportation
- Exploration/Settlement
- Commerce
- Archeology: Historic (Non-Aboriginal)

**Period of Significance**

1821-1866

**Significant Dates**

1840

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1821 with the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail, which likely passed through this site. By the 1840s this portion of the Santa Fe Trail was used by emigrants departing Westport, Missouri for Oregon and California. The period of significance ends in 1866 when the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail shifted to Junction City, Kansas, thus ending long-distance trail traffic east of this city.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

The Harmon Park Swale is associated with three great overland trails—the Santa Fe, the Oregon, and the California—as these three routes shared part of the same corridor in eastern Kansas. The swale is nationally significant as part of the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail and under Criterion D for its potential to yield information about commerce, migration, and wagon transportation in eastern Kansas. This swale is also nationally significant under Criteria A & D for its association with transportation and exploration/settlement along the Oregon and California trails. The site is now part of a public park. Its period of significance begins in 1821 with the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail and ends in 1866 when the railroad reached Junction City, Kansas, thus eliminating long-distance trail traffic east of this city. The nominated site materially reflects important historic events associated with Oregon and California trails, as well as the Santa Fe Trail historic contexts International Trade on the Mexican Road, 1821-1846; The Mexican-American War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1848; Expanding National Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1848-1861; The Effects of the Civil War on the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880; and the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

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### Elaboration

#### *Trails Overview*<sup>9</sup>

Soon after Mexican Independence in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail emerged as an international trade route linking the United States with Santa Fe in northern Mexico, and it crossed the entire length of the present-day state of Kansas. The majority of traffic along the trail, especially prior to 1848, consisted of civilian traders – Hispanic and American – with some military traffic and few emigrants. Following US victory in the Mexican-American War in 1848, the United States' Territory of New Mexico was created. The focus of the trail at this time began to shift to domestic trade and communication across the expanding country. In addition, large quantities of military freight were shipped along the route to newly established forts in the southwest. Until the completion of a connecting railroad in 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was the major commercial route linking the eastern US with the American Southwest.<sup>10</sup>

The Oregon Trail began as a network of Indian trade and migration routes that crisscrossed the American West. British, French, and American fur trappers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries found and followed those paths as they scoured the country for beaver. By the 1820s, caravans of pack trains, carts, and wagons were beating a rough “fur trace” from the Missouri River to the annual trappers' rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains of today's Wyoming and northern Utah. Pack trails ran west from the Rockies, following the Snake and Columbia rivers to Hudson's Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

<sup>10</sup> For a complete history of the Santa Fe Trail, see *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, Amended* (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> William E. Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848*, vol. 1, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 77, 80; Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*, vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific* (Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933), 52, 91, 105, 136, 149-154, 156-159; Bernard De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), 47, 59, 69; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*, (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 4; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1-5.

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When the first family of covered wagon pioneers joined a fur caravan heading to the Rockies from Missouri in 1840, the Oregon Country was jointly occupied by the fledgling United States and powerful Great Britain. Over the next several years, Britain watched uneasily as a low but steady tide of American emigrants surged along the developing, 2200-mile Oregon Trail and emptied into the Pacific Northwest. As the number of American settlers grew, so did the pressure for British withdrawal. In 1846 the two nations signed a treaty giving the U.S. control of lands between California and the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, today's border between the United States and Canada.<sup>12</sup> The emigration swelled in the early 1850s as homesteaders flocked to Oregon to stake their claims under the Donation Lands Act. By 1860, some 53,000 covered wagon emigrants and hundreds of thousands of livestock had followed the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest.<sup>13</sup>

The California Trail, too, began at the Missouri River and stretched more than 2000 miles across plains and mountains, then branched out to end at various towns and camps in and beyond the Sierra Nevada. Much of that distance was part of a shared corridor with the Oregon Trail through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho. Near today's Soda Springs, Idaho, the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party split away from the Oregon Trail and turned south to blaze a new emigrant route across the unmapped Great Basin and along the Humboldt River to California, part of Mexico at that time. Against all odds, the entire party survived the trip, and some of the successful pioneers set to work recruiting other emigrants to California. A trickle of over-landers followed over the next several years, developing a more direct trail across Idaho and Nevada to the Humboldt River and better routes through the Sierra Nevada.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War and annexation of Texas, the United States gained a tremendous swath of territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico across the Southern Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin to the Pacific coast. Emigration to California continued at a dribble despite the change of government. Few Americans were tempted to make the arduous trip until news of the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill reached the East and opened the emigration floodgates. In the spring of 1850 some 44,000 Argonauts and entrepreneurs rushed along the California Trail to seek their fortunes in the gold camps. As a result of the influx, California gained statehood the following year, and by 1860 over 200,000 emigrants had followed the long trail west to the Golden State.<sup>15</sup>

Starting in 1847, Oregon- and California-bound travelers shared the trail corridor with some 60,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who followed the Mormon Trail across Nebraska and Wyoming to the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah. Total emigration along the multi-trail corridor to Oregon, California, and Utah between 1840, when the pioneer Joel Walker led his family west, and 1869, when completion of the transcontinental railroad brought the overland trails era to a close, is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.<sup>16</sup>

Across the three decades of the emigration, the trail experience evolved. As historian John Unruh observed, "The emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development."<sup>17</sup> In the 1840s, emigrants were on their own once they left Missouri and entered "Indian Territory." During those years, many suffered extreme hardship and even death as they trudged across Nevada's Forty-mile Desert, struggled through

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<sup>12</sup> Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

<sup>13</sup> John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 60, 84-85.

<sup>14</sup> George Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 18, 27-28; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991), 39, 125, 149; Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 67-78.

<sup>15</sup> Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; William E. Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*, vol. 2, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 15, 17-18, 388.

<sup>16</sup> Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Unruh, 321-322.

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the Sierra Nevada, dodged the fierce rapids of the Columbia River, or tried untested new routes across the western mountains and deserts. Military and trading posts were few along the way and usually had little food to spare; emigrants were unable to resupply if their provisions ran low. But as the emigration progressed, explorers, military expeditions, and other travelers gradually opened shorter, safer routes. Towns and road ranches sprang up along the way. Businessmen established ferries, bridges, and toll roads, hauled water into the desert to sell to thirsty travelers, and built trading posts where travelers could resupply or exchange worn out draft animals for fresh ones. Meanwhile, as the years passed, the vast buffalo herds that 1840s emigrants had encountered in eastern Nebraska retreated farther and farther west, dwindling to near-extinction; hungry campfires and livestock consumed the woodlands and grasslands along the trail; and once-friendly native peoples, alarmed by the never-ending march of emigrants and embittered by the usurping of their lands and resources, were driven to armed resistance. As a result of these changes, travelers of the 1860s experienced the overland trails much differently than those who had gone west in the 1840s.

Not just the experience but the trails themselves changed, as well. For example, Independence and Westport, Missouri, at the eastern edge of the frontier, were the original Oregon and California trailheads. There emigrants could purchase supplies, wagons, and livestock and make repairs before merging with the great freight caravans rolling west along the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas. Near the present-day town of Gardner, the Oregon-California trail corridor branched off to follow the "Independence Road" across northeastern Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and Fort Kearny, Nebraska, and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during those years, especially following outbreaks of cholera, emigrants began outfitting and "jumping off" onto the trails farther and farther north, gradually shifting the bulk of the emigration traffic upriver to Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha/Council Bluffs.

By the close of the 1850s, the Nebraska river towns had largely replaced Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth, and St. Joseph as outfitting and jumping-off places, and the flow of Oregon-California traffic across Kansas had nearly dried up.<sup>18</sup> Riding a steamboat up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs saved emigrants several difficult stream crossings and many days of driving across northeastern Kansas. Starting farther north also enabled travelers to avoid the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid-1850s and allowed them to take advantage of substantial trail improvements made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help its Mormon emigrants cross Nebraska.

Farther west, significant new alternates were developed, including Sublette's, Hudspeth's, and Goodale's cutoffs across Wyoming and Idaho, the difficult Hastings Cutoff through Utah's Wasatch Mountains and over the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Raft River route to the Humboldt, and several Oregon dry-land alternatives to the dangerous Columbia River passage. New wagon roads punched through the Sierra Nevada and commercial ferries, bridges, and other improvements increasingly aided the emigration as the years passed.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 was the greatest improvement to western emigration by far. The driving of the ceremonial golden spike that linked the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was a stake in the heart of the covered wagon era. The laborious, dangerous overland trip that once took five to six months, killed hundreds of thousands of draft animals, and tested the endurance of the most determined emigrants now could be made safely in a matter of weeks. Some emigrants who could not afford train passage continued to use the old Oregon and California trails, but long-distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 104-105.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Hurlburt Scott, *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*, (Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958), 87-100, 122, 135.

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The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century emigration of hundreds of thousands of people, rich and poor, free and slave, along the Oregon and California trails is unparalleled in world history. The trails they traveled opened the door for the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, the transcontinental railroad, and parts of the modern interstate highway system, all of which followed the Oregon and California trails corridor. The overland emigration fulfilled the nation's "manifest destiny" to stretch from Atlantic to Pacific, spurred economic development and security, and directed the course of American history. At the same time, however, it disrupted hundreds of indigenous cultures, destroyed traditional lifeways that had developed over millennia, and contributed to extinctions and significant shifts in native plant and animal populations. Today's West is largely the product of the California and Oregon emigrations and the events that flowed from those movements. Extant trail remnants, including wagon swales and ruts, stream crossings, graves, campgrounds, and associated forts, are touchstones to that iconic place and period in the nation's history.

The national and regional significance of the Oregon and California trails has been identified through the work of many lay and professional historians and defined in numerous scholarly publications.<sup>20</sup> Congress designated the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in 1978 and 1992, respectively, and the National Park Service in 1998 published a combined comprehensive management and use plan/environmental impact statement for the Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

In Kansas, approximately 358 miles of wagon route are designated as being part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail; 165 miles are designated as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail, and 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail. Many more miles of historic wagon route, once traveled by emigrants to the far west, exist across Kansas, and many of these routes are currently under study for possible addition to the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails.

#### *Harmon Park Swale*

Travelers bound for Santa Fe, Oregon, and California shared the same routes through the Kansas City metropolitan area until the road to Oregon and California diverged from the road to Santa Fe near present-day Gardner, Kansas. Before approaching Gardner, travelers had a variety of smaller routes from which to choose to travel through the region.

Before Independence, Missouri became the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail in 1827-1828, most travelers heading west from the Franklin, Missouri area passed Fort Osage. From this fort, approximately 15 miles northeast of present-day Independence, travelers had two options (*Figure 6*). They could head south to the Blue Spring campground (present-day Blue Springs, Missouri, 17 miles south of Fort Osage); cross the Big Blue River at what is now 151<sup>st</sup> Street and State Line Road in south Kansas City, Missouri; and encamp at Lone Elm campground in present-day Olathe, Kansas before continuing to Gardner and eventually Santa Fe. The second, more popular, option was to head west and southwest out of Fort Osage to what became Independence; cross the Big Blue River in present-day Swope Park (in Kansas City, Missouri); and encamp at Elm Grove (also in present-day Olathe) before reaching Gardner.<sup>21</sup>

This second route left the State of Missouri at Nine Mile Point, so-called because it is nine miles below the Kansas River, and passed through the land in which the nominated swale is located. The first mention of this route was in September 1823 by surveyor Joseph Brown. He was tasked with surveying the western boundary of the State of Missouri in that year, erecting mounds or markers every mile along the state line.<sup>22</sup> Ten chains

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<sup>20</sup> See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Crease, "Trace of the Blues: The Santa Fe Trail, the Blue River, and the True Nature of the Old Trace in Metropolitan Kansas City," *Wagon Tracks* 11 (August 1997): 9, 14. This article analyzes the early routes through the Kansas City area before Independence and Westport became established termini.

<sup>22</sup> Crease, "Trace of the Blues," 11.

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(660 feet) south of the nine mile mark, Brown wrote, "To a trace leading from Fort Osage toward Santa Fe...."<sup>23</sup> Modern-day calculations put this trace at 79<sup>th</sup> Street in Prairie Village, due east of Harmon Park. That Brown mentioned the road going to Santa Fe indicates this route was already in use prior to his 1823 survey.

Between 1825 and 1827, Brown was the lead surveyor of the Sibley Survey. George Sibley, Joseph Brown, and the rest of the survey expedition were tasked with surveying the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Osage to the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian, which marked the boundary between the United States and Mexico prior to the Mexican-American War in the 1840s.<sup>24</sup> Brown's map and the accompanying field notes indicate the expedition team crossed the state line at Nine Mile Point (*Figure 7*).<sup>25</sup> Travelers continued crossing the state line at this location until at least 1839.<sup>26</sup>

By the mid-1840s, Westport rivaled Independence as an eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail, making necessary a new route straight south out of Westport that connected with the previously-established trail. By this time, as well, emigrants used both Westport and Independence as outfitting points for their journeys to Oregon and California territories, using portions of the routes through the Kansas City area previously created by Santa Fe Trail traffic. The new route out of Westport caused the gradual shift of the state line crossing, which "worked its way north, so that by the early 1850s the route that ran south out of Westport crossed over a mile north [of Nine Mile Point] at about present 69<sup>th</sup> St..."<sup>27</sup> (*Figure 8*). It was about this time that the commonly-accepted routes through the Kansas City area were firmly established.<sup>28</sup>

The trail remnant in Harmon Park was created by some of the earliest Santa Fe traders heading west from Independence, but this site saw the bulk of its traffic headed to and from Westport after it became an outfitting location in 1840. Though the crossing of the state line shifted north, the route through Harmon Park remained unchanged, as is evidenced by the General Land Office survey in 1856 (*Figure 9*).

The Civil War, and the events leading up to it, interrupted travel to and from the Kansas City area. By 1860, emigrants using the Oregon and California trails were departing from river towns along the Iowa-Nebraska border. Between 1861 and 1864, Santa Fe traffic avoided Kansas City altogether by using Fort Leavenworth as a starting point. In 1865, Westport regained its status as the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail. This status was short-lived, however, as in June 1866, the Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division (later known as the Kansas Pacific), reached Junction City, Kansas. The majority of Santa Fe freight was then transported to this town by railroad; thus, long-distance trail traffic came to an end east of Junction City in that year.

### *Archeological Potential*

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail segments have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. Though no such surveys have been undertaken on this trail segment, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This segment and its immediate landscape have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Brown, as quoted in Crease, "Trace of the Blues...", 12.

<sup>24</sup> Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 123. Eventually, the survey expedition crossed the Arkansas River near Chouteau's Island (no longer extant) in present-day Kearny County, Kansas and headed south to Taos.

<sup>25</sup> "Field Book Page 10," in L. Stephen Schmidt and Richard Hayden, "Appendix A: Text of Field Book," *The Survey and Maps of the Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827*, Santa Fe Trail Association Grant Report (August 2011): 25 [electronic copy on-line]; available from *Santa Fe Trail Association Online*, < [http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix_A.pdf) > (accessed 27 August 2013)

<sup>26</sup> Crease, "Trace of the Blues," 14.

<sup>27</sup> Crease, "Trace of the Blues," 14.

<sup>28</sup> Crease, "Trace of the Blues," 14.



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the trail from Westport to Elm Grove Campground, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swales and adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century trade and economic development. Further investigation could address key questions regarding trade and transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played by the military, various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail," F116. Citation covers paragraph.

Harmon Park Swale  
Name of Property

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Harmon Park Swale  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Kansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 0.57

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

**The following coordinates (A through D) are for the swale itself.**

A	<u>38.987803</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632947</u> Longitude	C	<u>38.987340</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633236</u> Longitude
B	<u>38.987723</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632864</u> Longitude	D	<u>38.987411</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633319</u> Longitude

**The following coordinates (E through H) are for the site boundaries.**

E	<u>38.987866</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632963</u> Longitude	G	<u>38.987000</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633594</u> Longitude
F	<u>38.987726</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632771</u> Longitude	H	<u>38.987107</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633766</u> Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated 0.57-acre site is located entirely within the Austin Harmon Park, a city-owned property in the SE¼ of Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East. The nominated site is a small intact swale in a maintained park, bounded on all sides by areas of recent disturbance (primarily residential and commercial development). Mowed lawns with no discernible trail remains are located to the northeast, southeast, and southwest sides; a line of trees roughly defines the southeast boundary. A concrete sidewalk is located to the northwest of the site. The nominated site contains the swale and a small land buffer around the swale.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary was developed in cooperation with the City of Prairie Village to allow for the nomination of this swale to move forward. The nominated site incorporates the extant swale, as verified in LiDAR imagery and a land buffer around the swale. Although the MPS requires a 50-meter buffer around the extant swale to incorporate "potential features historically associated with wagon movement and other aspects of historic significance and use," only the area to the southwest of the swale contains this buffer. The areas to the northwest and northeast of the swale have been previously disturbed by later park development. Similarly, the area to the east and southeast are expected to be further disturbed by the construction of a fire station. The selected boundary has been agreed upon by both the owner and the SHPO as a compromise while still protecting the documented historic resource.

Harmon Park Swale  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Kansas  
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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title KSHS Staff (Rick Anderson, Amanda K. Loughlin, Tim Weston)  
organization Kansas Historical Society date Summer 2013; updated Spring 2018  
street & number 6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave telephone 785-272-8681  
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66615  
e-mail kshs.shpo@ks.gov

**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name City of Prairie Village  
street & number 7700 Mission Road telephone 913-381-6464  
city or town Prairie Village state KS zip code 66208

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Harmon Park Swale  
City or Vicinity: Prairie Village  
County: Johnson State: KS  
Photographer: Rick Anderson  
Date Photographed: August 27, 2010  
(Condition and appearance verified in March 2018 by Amanda Loughlin)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 6: Looking SW along swale.
- 2 of 6: Looking SW along swale from near the NE end of site.
- 3 of 6: Looking SW along swale from near the middle end of swale.
- 4 of 6: Looking S across swale.
- 5 of 6: Looking S across swale.
- 6 of 6: Looking NE along swale from the SW end of site.

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Harmon Park Swale  
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Figure 1. Aerial image of area surrounding Austin Harmon Park (in box).

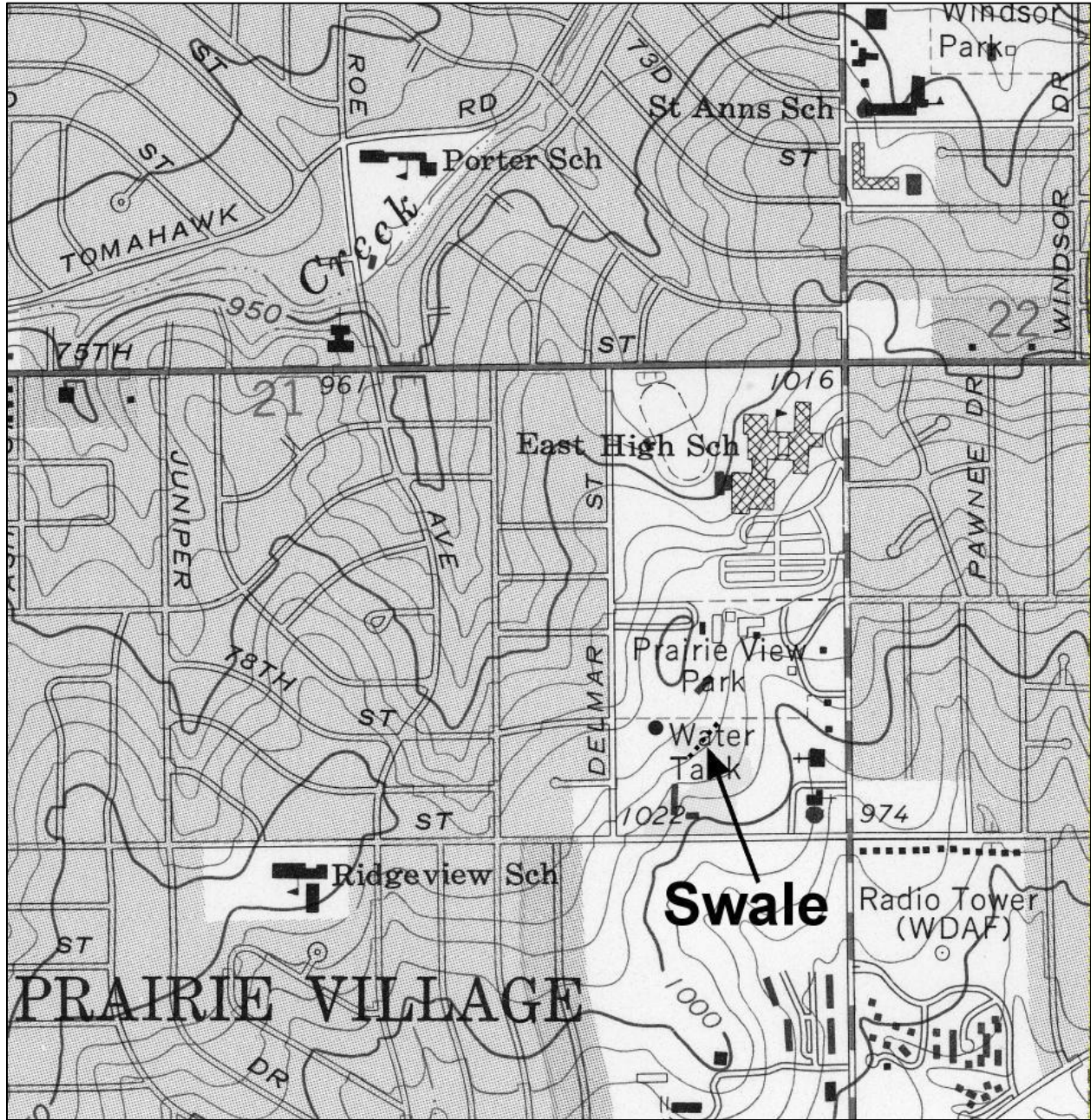




Harmon Park Swale  
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Figure 2. Location of the Harmon Park Swale.  
Prairie Village Kansas: (U.S.G.S. 7.5' Lenexa Quadrangle Map)

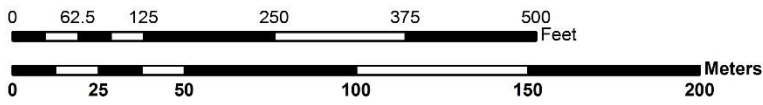
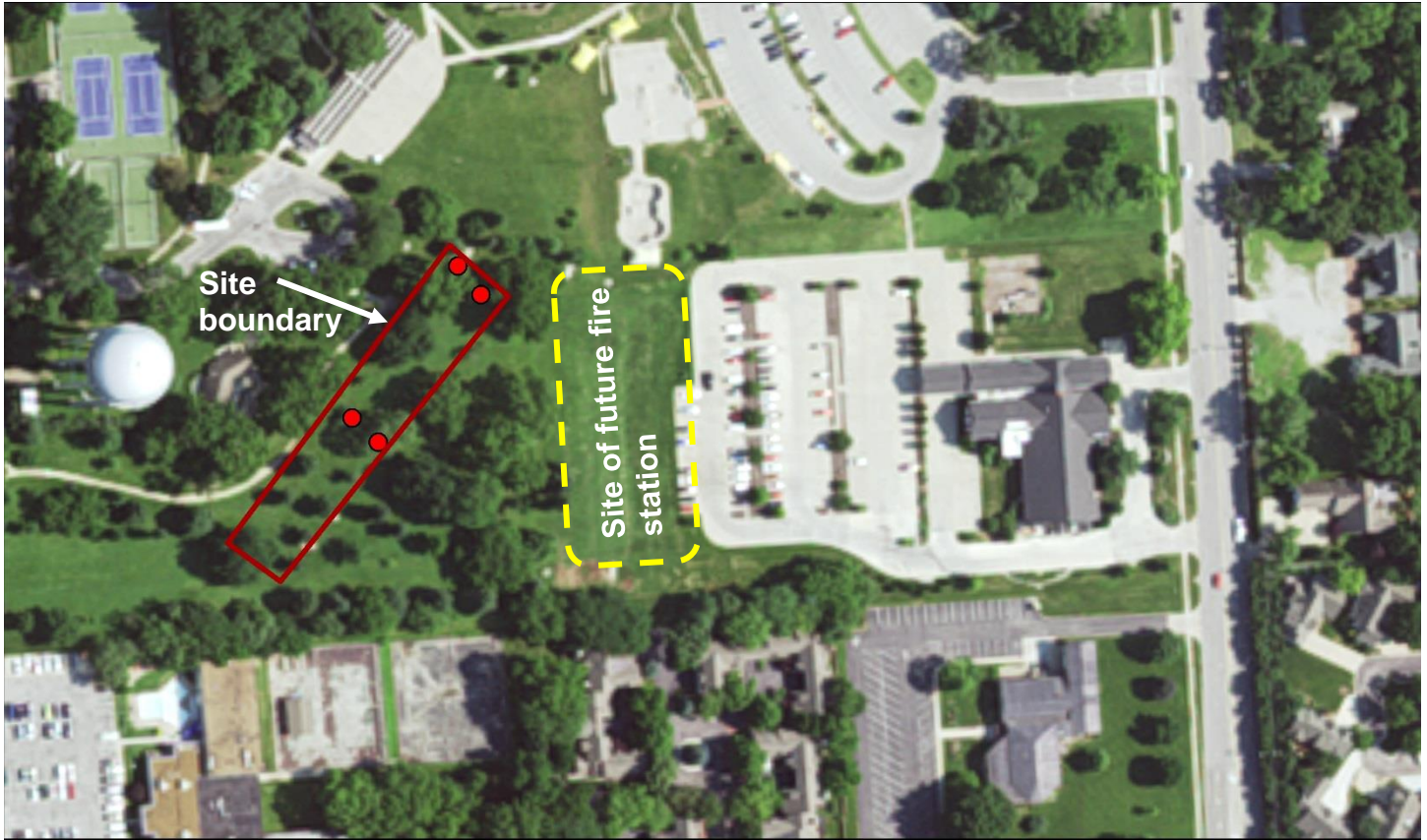




Harmon Park Swale  
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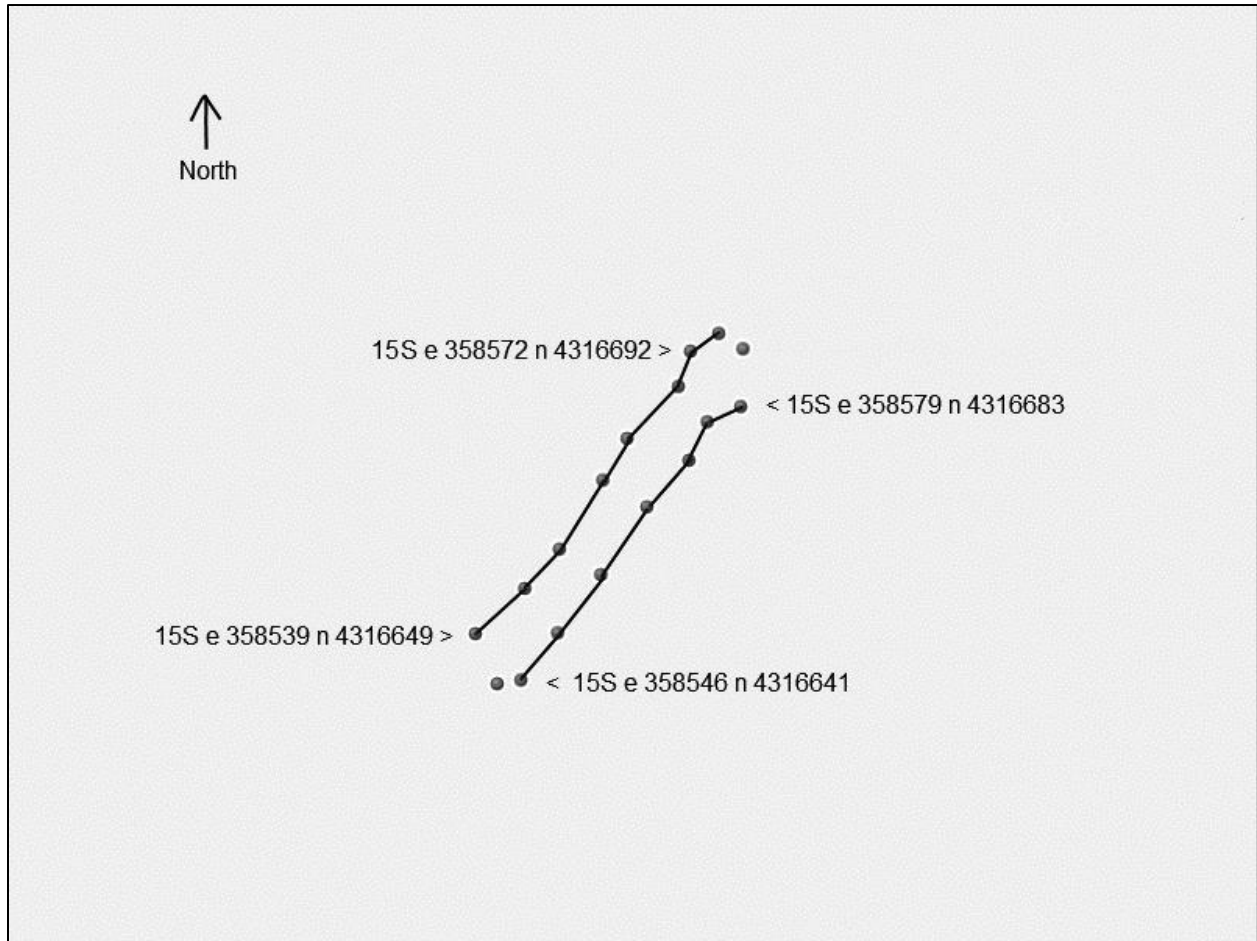
**Figure 3.** Aerial view of the Harmon Park Swale, showing the swale (marked with dots) with the nominated boundary.



Harmon Park Swale  
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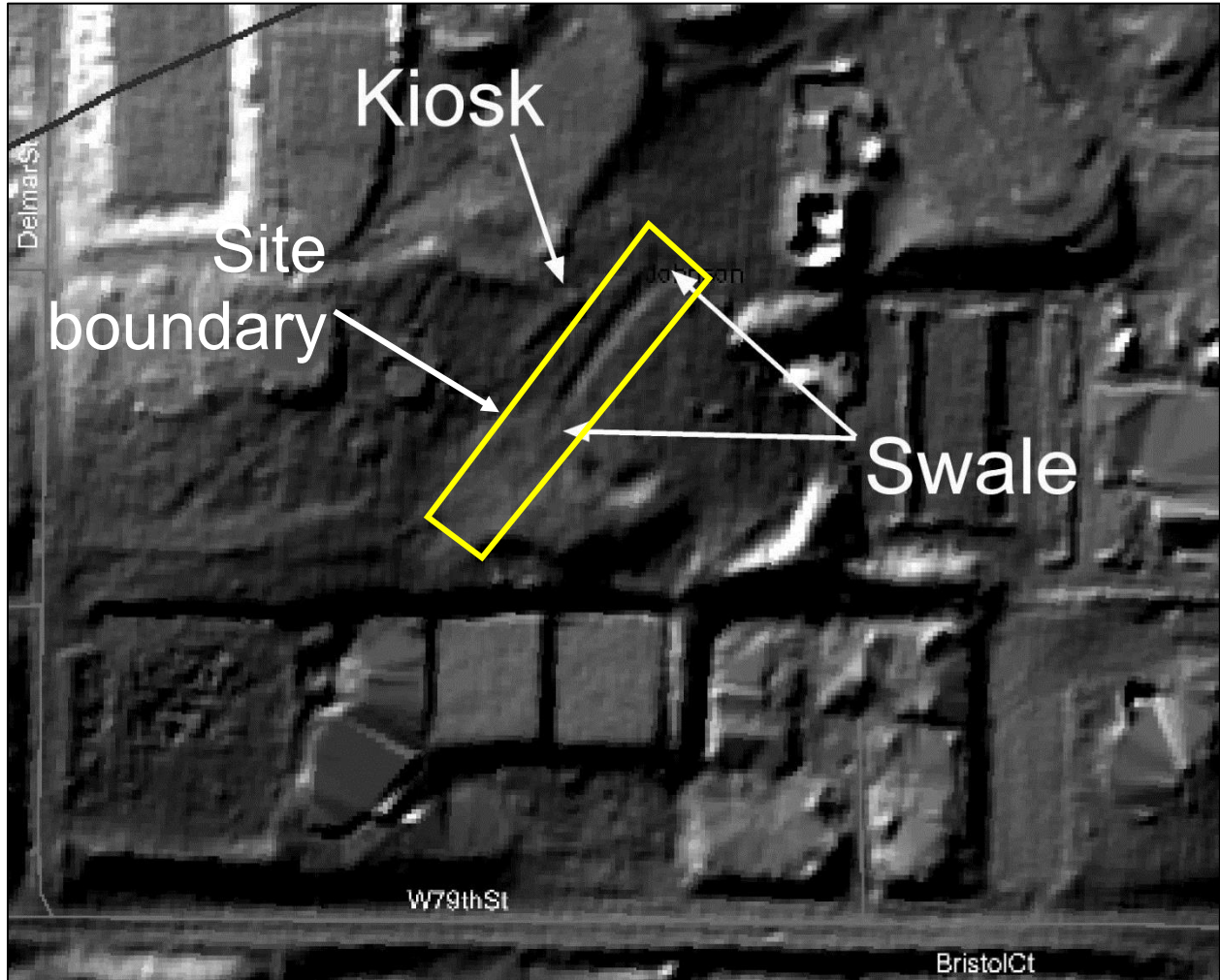
Figure 4. GPS Coordinates of the Harmon Park Swale (NAD83).



Harmon Park Swale  
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Figure 5. 2006 LiDAR imagery showing the Harmon Park Swale.  
North is up; no scale.





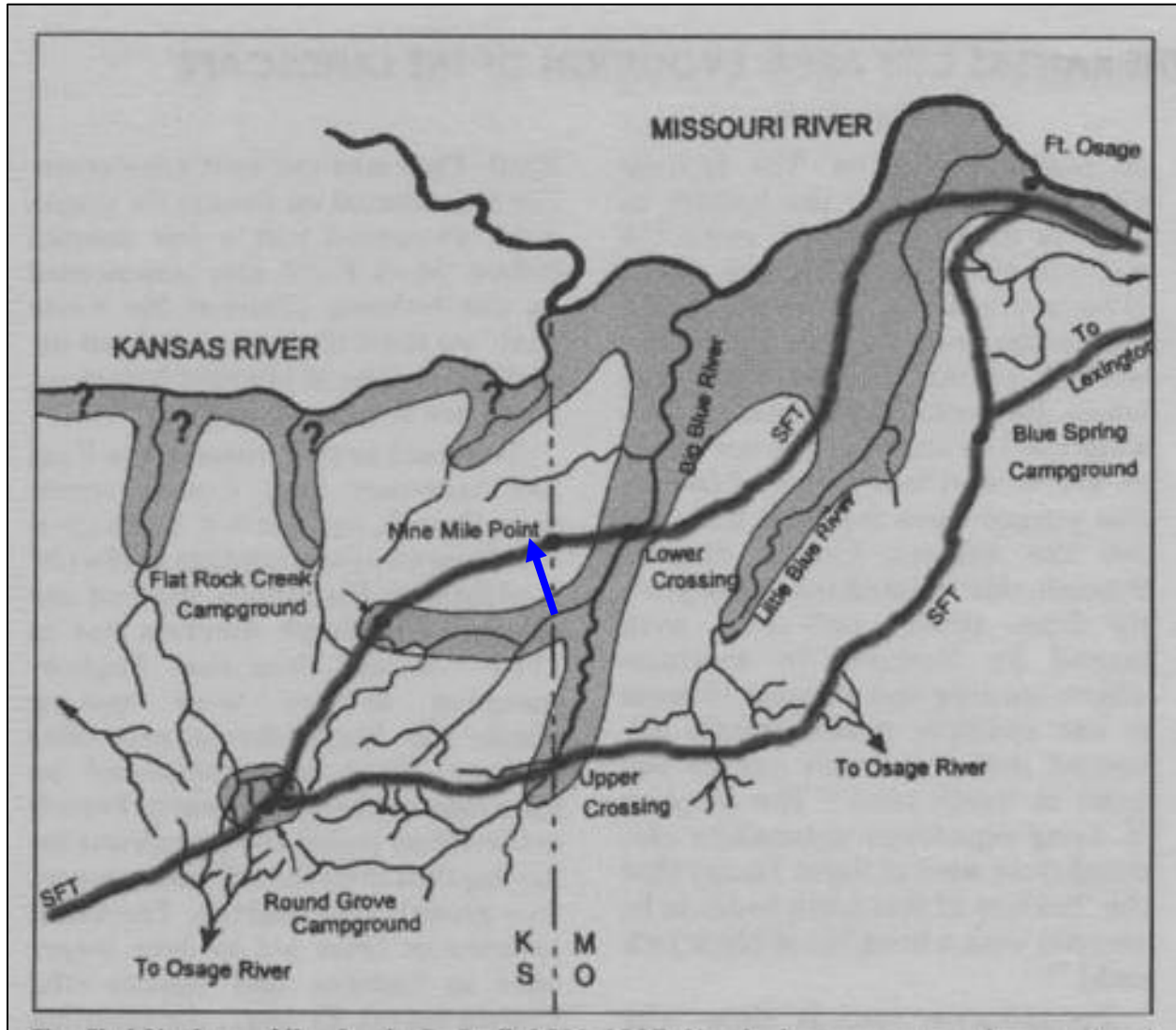
Harmon Park Swale  
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**Figure 6.** The Santa Fe Trail through the Kansas City metropolitan area 1821-1827, as delineated by Craig Crease. Source: Hal Jackson, "The Santa Fe Trail in the Kansas City Area: Evolution of the Landscape," *Wagon Tracks* 15 (February 2001): 8.

Arrow indicates location of Harmon Park Swale.

(Note: Round Grove Campground is incorrectly labeled on this map.)

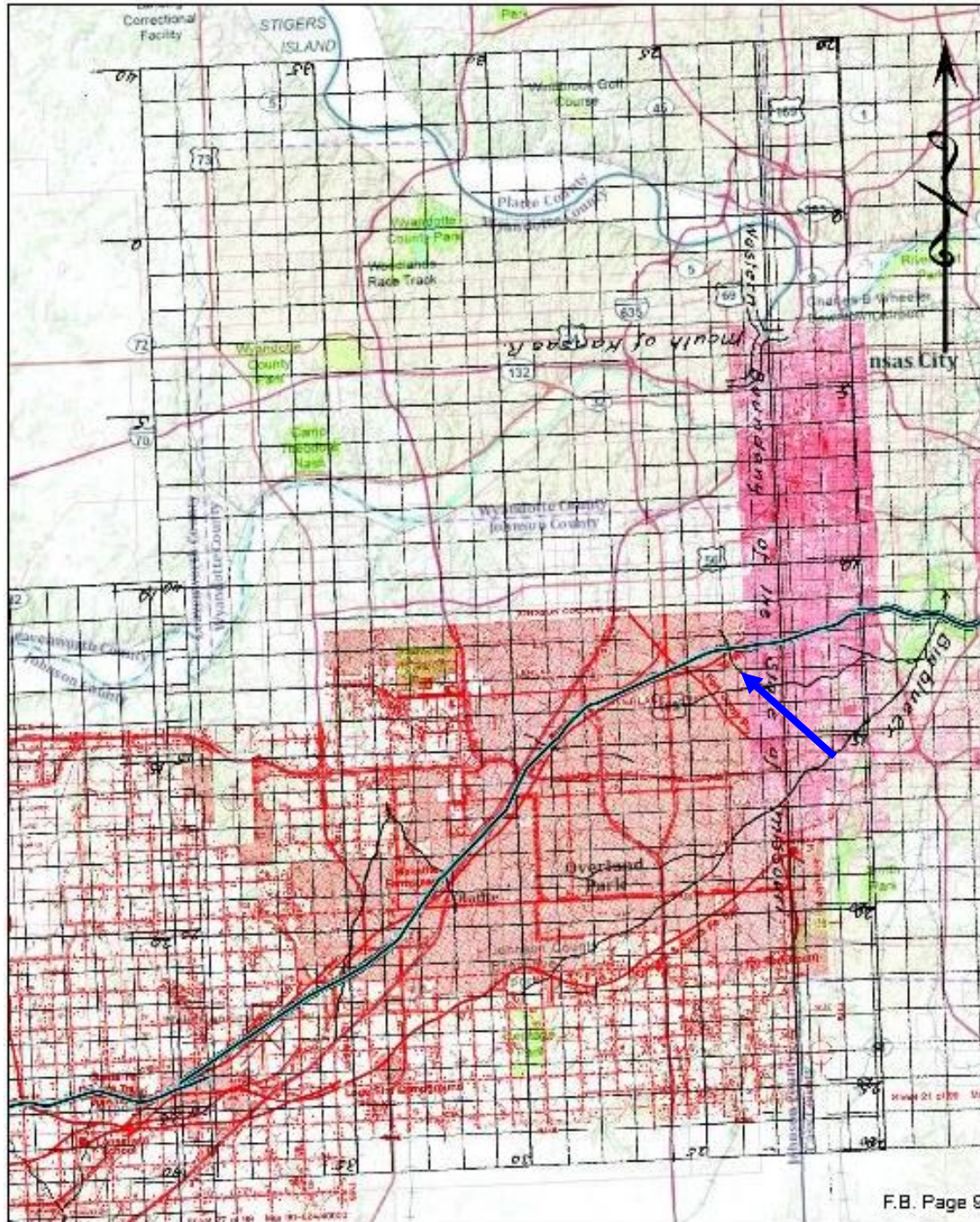




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**Figure 7.** "Field Book Page 9," in Schmidt and Hayden, "Appendix G: Plots of the Survey Route on Modern Maps," *The Survey and Maps of the Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827*, Santa Fe Trail Association Grant Report (August 2011): n.p. [electronic copy on-line]; available from *Santa Fe Trail Association Online*, < [http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix\\_G.pdf](http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix_G.pdf)> (accessed 27August 2013). Arrow indicates location of Harmon Park.



Mapping of Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827



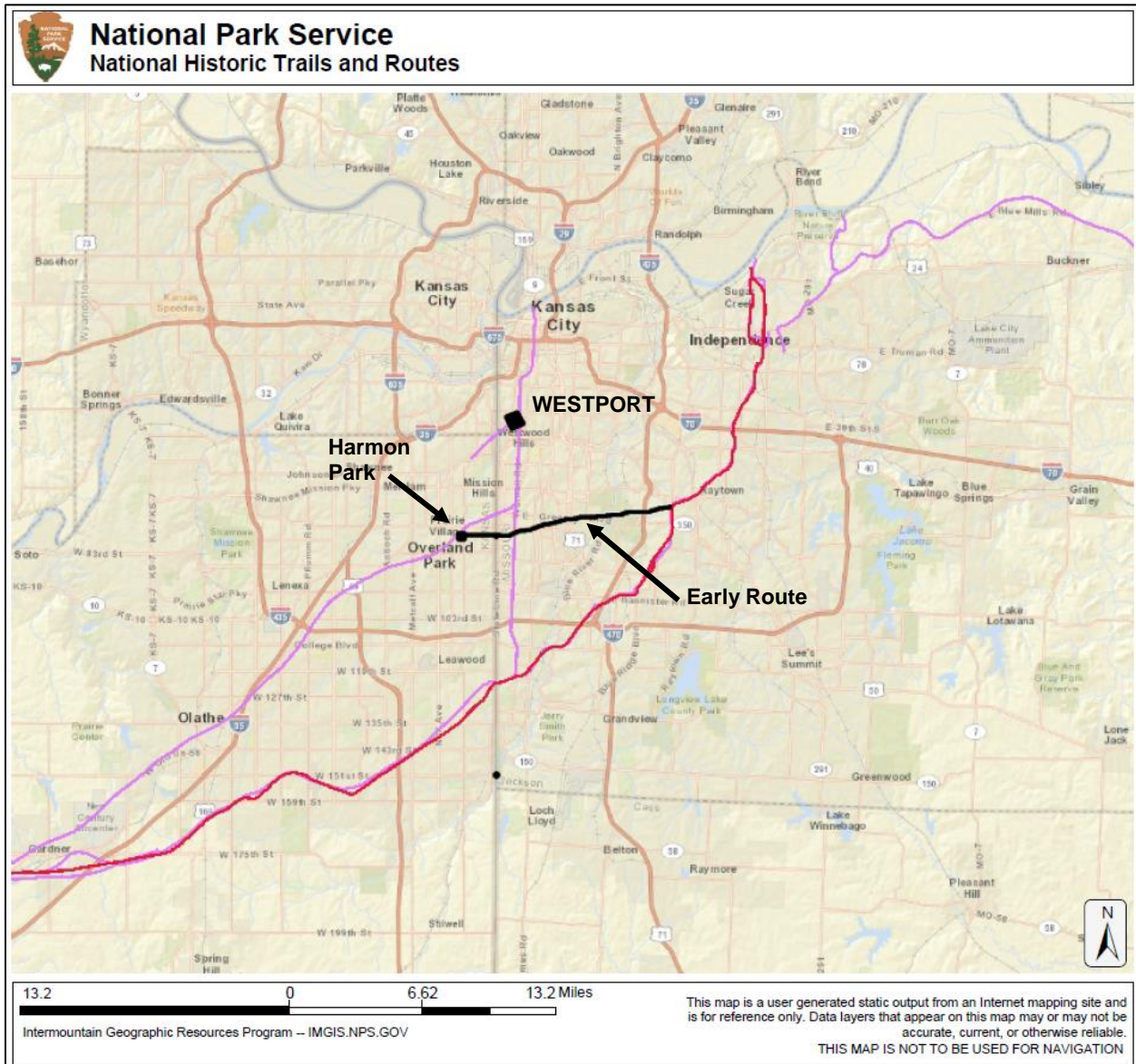
Santa Fe Trail Association - SFTA  
by L. Stephen Schmidt, Richard Hayden - August 2011



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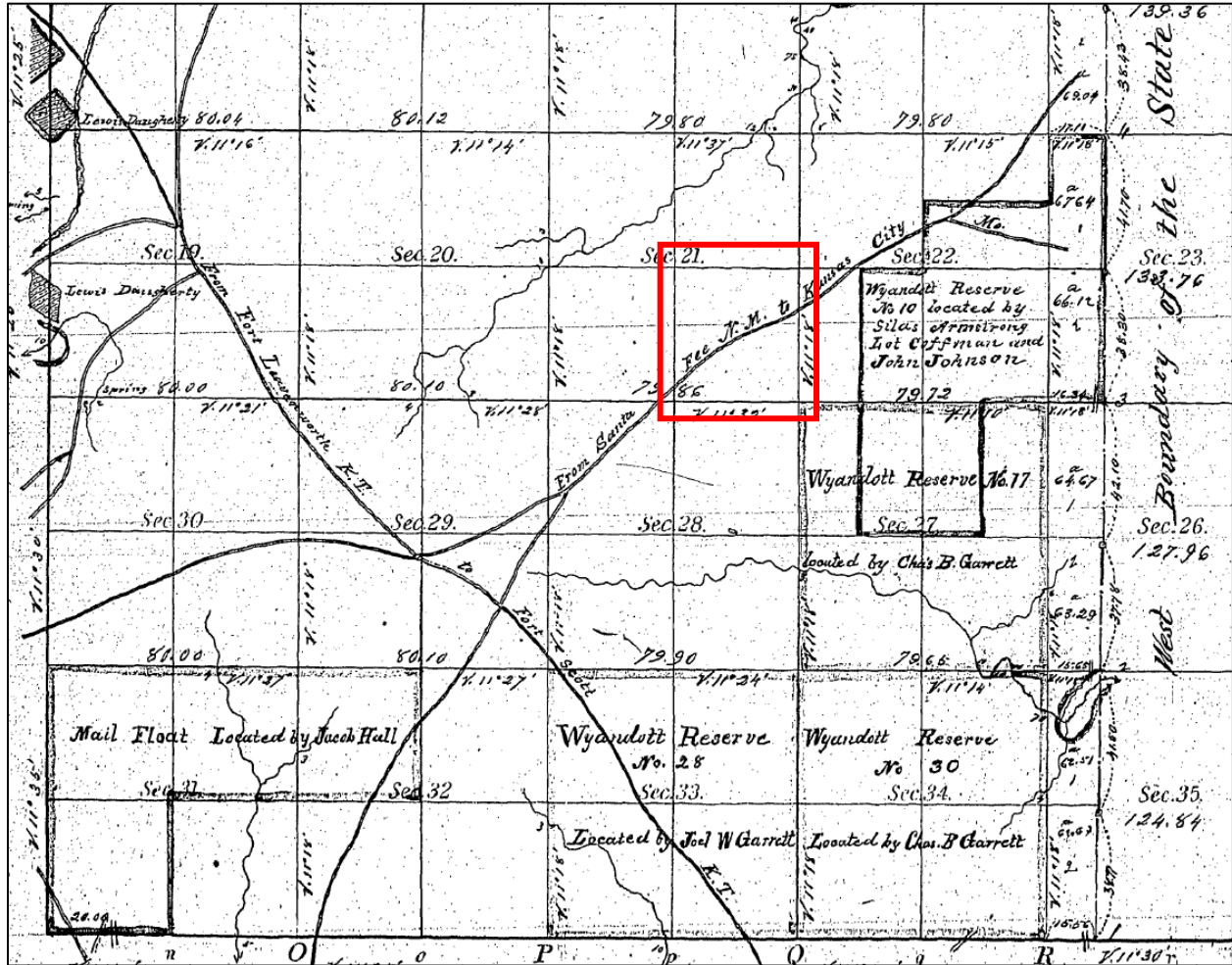
**Figure 8.** This map represents the paths of the Santa Fe and California National Historic trails as mapped by the National Park Service. The approximate path used by early travelers in relation to the nominated site is also represented.



Harmon Park Swale  
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Figure 9. Partial 1856 General Land Office (GLO) survey map, showing Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East where Harmon Park is now located.

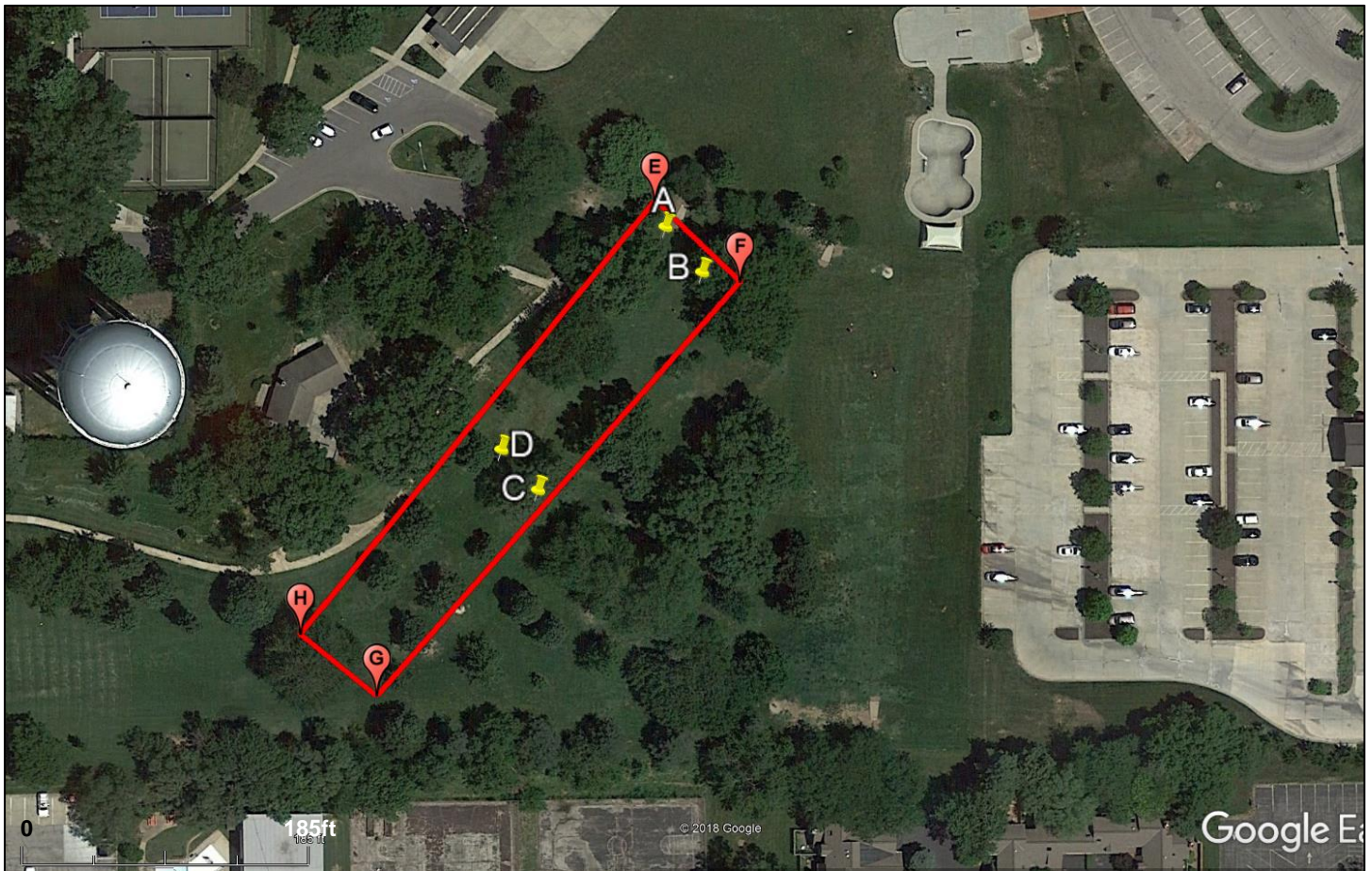




Harmon Park Swale  
Name of Property

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Boundary Map. Google Earth aerial (June 2017).



Total acreage = 0.57 acres

The following coordinates (A through D) are for the swale itself. Datum = WGS84

A	<u>38.987803</u>	<u>-94.632947</u>	C	<u>38.987340</u>	<u>-94.633236</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
B	<u>38.987723</u>	<u>-94.632864</u>	D	<u>38.987411</u>	<u>-94.633319</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

The following coordinates (E through H) are for the site boundaries. Datum = WGS84

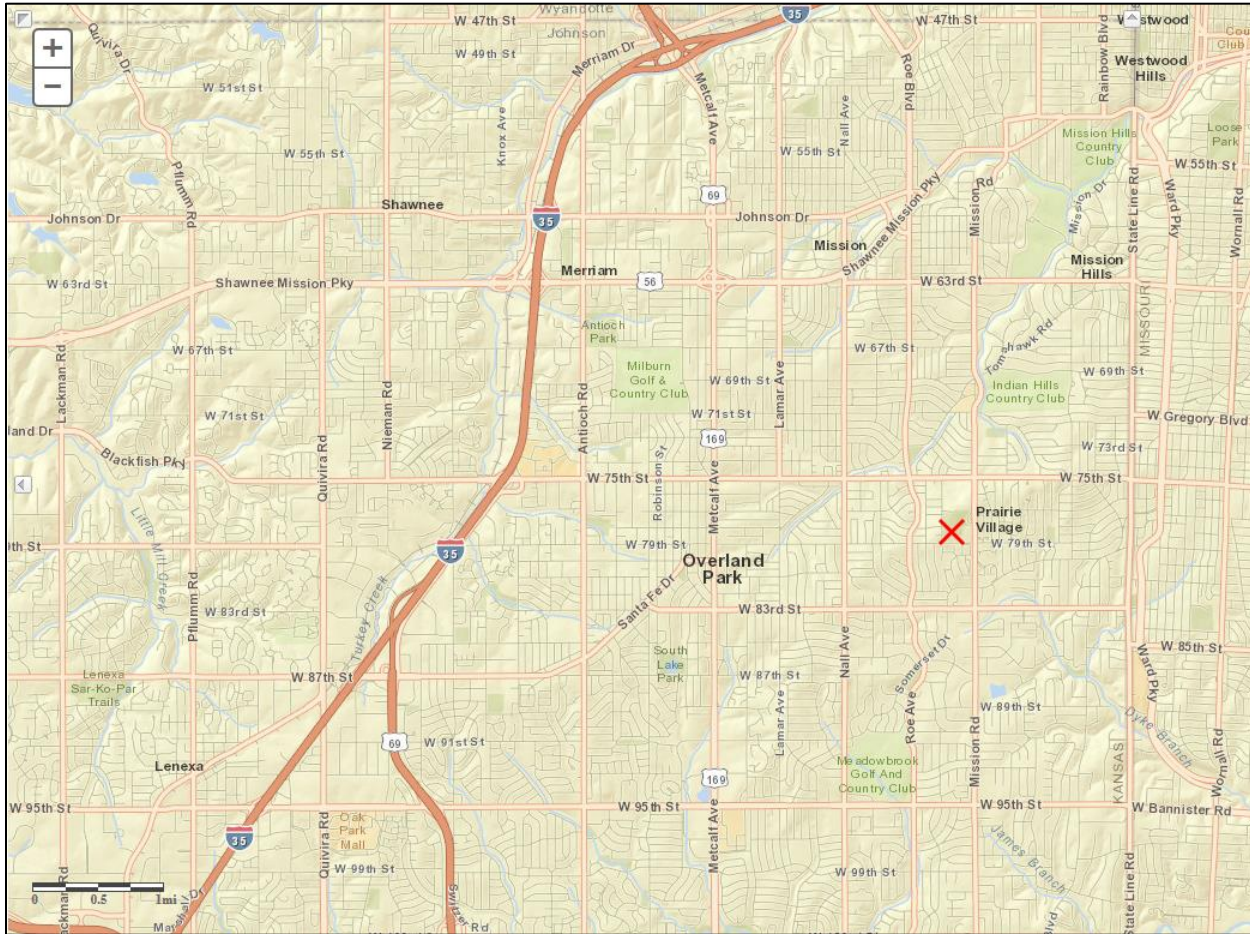
E	<u>38.987866</u>	<u>-94.632963</u>	G	<u>38.987000</u>	<u>-94.633594</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
F	<u>38.987726</u>	<u>-94.632771</u>	H	<u>38.987107</u>	<u>-94.633766</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

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**Contextual Map.**

“X” indicates location of nominated site.





























National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/7/2018      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 9/21/2018      Date of Weekly List: 11/9/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      9/21/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

THE CITY OF PRAIRIE VILLAGE  
STAR OF KANSAS

June 18, 2013

RECEIVED

JUN 21 2013

Cultural Resources Division

Ms Amanda Loughlin  
Trails Project Coordinator  
Kansas Historical Society  
6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66615

Dear Ms Loughlin:

**RE: Oregon-California-Santa Fe Trail Remnant in Austin Harmon Park**

I regret to inform you that, at this time, the City of Prairie Village objects to the nomination of the Santa Fe Trail Remnant in Austin Harmon Park for the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National Register of historic Places. We understand that the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review will still determine the eligibility of the site and ask to be informed of the outcome of that review.

Enclosed is the city's objection to having its property nominated at this time. If you have any questions, or need further information please contact Danielle Dulin, Assistant to the City Administrator at 913-385-4635.

Sincerely,



Joyce Hagen Mundy  
City Clerk

Enclosures

Cc: Danielle Dulin

6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66615



phone: 785-272-8681  
fax: 785-272-8682  
cultural\_resources@kshs.org

Kansas Historical Society

Sam Brownback, Governor

Jennie Chinn, Executive Director



September 30, 2013

Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, N. W.  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit for your consideration the following National Register nominations for **Determination of Eligibility**:

- Santa Fe Trail – Stevens County Segment 1 (Schmidt's Ruts) – Stevens County
- Havana Stage Station – Osage County
- Harmon Park Swale – Johnson County

Notarized letters of objection are enclosed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I may be reached at 785-272-8681 ext. 216 or [smartin@kshs.org](mailto:smartin@kshs.org).

Sincerely yours,

Sarah J. Martin  
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures



6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Topeka KS 66615

phone: 785-272-8681  
fax: 785-272-8682  
survey@kshs.org

Sam Brownback, Governor  
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

Date: June 17, 2013

Owner(s): CITY OF PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS  
PLEASE PRINT

Owner(s) Address: 7700 MISSION ROAD PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS 66208  
STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

As the owner(s) of AUSTIN HANCOCK PARK PRAIRIE VILLAGE, JOHNSON COUNTY,  
NAME OF PROPERTY, CITY (VICINITY), COUNTY

I (we) understand that

- This is an honorific designation;
- I (we) will have the opportunity to review and comment on the written nomination and the proposed boundaries of the nominated property before it is presented to the Historic Sites Board of Review;
- I (we) have the right to restrict from public view any documentation about this property, including the address/exact location;
- No provision of the Kansas State Preservation Law (KSA 75-2715 – 75-2726) can restrict the agricultural use of my (our) land used for agricultural purposes;
- I (we) am (are) not required to allow public access to this property;
- I (we) retain full ownership rights to this property;
- No fees are involved in this nomination process.

Therefore, I (we) a)        do not object or b) X do object\* to my (our) property being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National Register of Historic Places as a historic resource of the Santa Fe Trail.

Ronald L. Shaffer, Mayor  
OWNER SIGNATURE(S)

I (we) request the documentation of my (our) property to be restricted from public view:             
INITIAL

\* If objecting, please have this form notarized.

Joyce Hagen Mundy







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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 determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Harmon Park Swale

other names/site number Prairie Village Swale; KHRI #091-3444

### 2. Location

street & number Austin Harmon Park, 7700 Mission Road  not for publication

city or town Prairie Village  vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Johnson code 091 zip code 66208

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this    nomination   x   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 at the following level(s) of significance:  
  x   national    statewide    local

Patrick Zolner 9-27-13  
 Signature of certifying official Date  
DSHPO  
 Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting official Date  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register    determined eligible for the National Register  
   determined not eligible for the National Register    removed from the National Register  
   other (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

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

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail

0

Returned

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

LANDSCAPE/park

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation: N/A  
walls: N/A  
roof: N/A  
other: N/A

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary

The (Austin) Harmon Park Swale is located within a predominately residential portion of Prairie Village, Johnson County, eastern Kansas (SE¼, SE¼ Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East).<sup>1</sup> This city park's single swale is situated along the combined route of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails as it headed southwest out of Westport, Missouri (approximately five miles to the northeast) to present-day Gardner, Kansas (approximately 25 miles to the southwest) where the Santa Fe Trail split-off from the Oregon and California trail. The Harmon Park Swale is one of the few intact trail remains in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area, as urban and suburban development has greatly encroached upon the trail in this region. The nominated 2.28-acre site is an urban example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the revised *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* multiple property nomination.

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### Elaboration

#### *General Landscape*<sup>2</sup>

Harmon Park is located within the Attenuated Drift Border division of the Dissected Till Plains section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains division of North America.<sup>3</sup> The Dissected Till Plains is a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains that covers all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Most of the Dissected Till Plains is taken up by a glaciated area known as the Kansas Drift Plain. The less heavily glaciated Attenuated Drift Border lies along the southern and western periphery of the Dissected Till Plains in a 25-35 mile wide strip roughly marked by the Kansas, Big Blue, and Little Blue rivers. Bedrock in the western part of the Dissected Till Plains consists of sedimentary formations of Permian age, while bedrock formations throughout the rest of the area are of Pennsylvanian age. The formations are made up of interstratified beds of limestone, shale, and sandstone, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thicknesses. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to a hundred feet in the bluffs along the Missouri river. The loess thins rapidly away from the river.

The topography of the region is directly related to the degree of glaciation. The heavily glaciated Kansas Drift Plain has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface, while the lightly glaciated Attenuated Drift Border is more rugged, with an erosional rock-controlled surface similar in most respects to that of the Osage Plains. Unlike the latter, which was never glaciated, the Attenuated Drift Border is covered by isolated patches of glacial till and outwash along with scattered boulders, cobbles, and pebbles of ice-transported materials, including quartzites, granites, and diorites brought in from locations well to the north of the state. The resultant topography is less bold than that of the Osage Plains but decidedly rougher and of greater relief than the Kansas Drift Plain.

Judging from early historical accounts and soil survey data, the vegetation of northeast Kansas at the time of initial white settlement consisted almost entirely of prairie cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine forest. The natural vegetation of most of the area was tall grass prairie consisting of dense stands of big and little bluestem. The prairie was cut through by riverine forest vegetation consisting of broadleaf deciduous forests often containing dense undergrowth and many vines, occasionally interrupted by freshwater marshes. Hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm were the dominant forest species;<sup>4</sup> although oak, black walnut, linden, sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and wild grape.<sup>5</sup> Prairie vegetation

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<sup>1</sup> A swale is a linear depression in the ground surface, often deep enough to have sloping sides. A swale is not an individual wheel track; rather, it is a broad depression created by large numbers of animal-drawn conveyances.

<sup>2</sup> The following three paragraphs are adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

<sup>3</sup> W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 291.

<sup>4</sup> A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 600-601.

<sup>5</sup> Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 14.

covered the uplands in all but the eastern edge of the Dissected Till Plains, where forested conditions prevailed. The natural vegetation of that area consisted of medium tall multilayered broadleaf deciduous forest, with various forms of hickory and oak being the dominant species.<sup>6</sup> The forest was most pervasive on the bluffs along the Missouri river. To the west, the forest/prairie transition was marked by a "mosaic" situation in which forests with islands of prairie gradually changed westward into prairie with islands of forest,<sup>7</sup> and finally into prairie with little or no upland forest vegetation.

### *Landscape of the Nominated Site*

Harmon Park is located within a predominately suburban residential neighborhood (Figure 1). The nominated 2.28-acre site is surrounded by commercial development adjacent to the south and east, Delmar Street to the west, and park amenities to the north and Shawnee Mission East High School's campus. The City of Prairie Village, who owns and maintains the park, has constructed a sidewalk and interpretive kiosk overlooking the swale to the north. The landscape immediately surrounding the swale is mostly mown grass with a few deciduous trees. In order to accentuate the swale's boundaries, two parallel rows of trees were planted along the edges of the swale.

### *Trail Segment*

The Harmon Park swale is an example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the revised multiple property nomination. This single swale is oriented northeast-southwest and remains at an elevation of approximately 314 meters (1030 feet) (Figure 2). The swale is approximately 43 meters (141 feet) long by 7 meters (23 feet) wide (Figures 3 & 4).

Aerial photography shows the park area clearly, along with the distinctive sidewalk and interpretive kiosk. The swale, however, can only be seen by reference to those features and by looking for the two parallel rows of trees (Figure 3). While LiDAR images suggest a rather extensive swale, the feature is only visible on the ground near the interpretive kiosk. LiDAR (Light Distance and Ranging) imagery of Harmon Park shows not only the distinctive sidewalk and interpretive kiosk, but also the swale, clearly visible in a northeast-southwest orientation (Figure 5).<sup>8</sup> While there are other intriguing linear features visible on the image, none can be confidently followed on the ground. For that matter, the swale appears to be smaller on the ground than it does on the LiDAR image.

<sup>6</sup> Kuchler, 599.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 588.

<sup>8</sup> LiDAR can be an excellent tool for locating and/or defining the extent of subtle trail remnants. Such images are produced with systematic laser aerial data acquisition. The greatest advantage of LiDAR is its ability to see through vegetation and to produce shaded images that enhance subtle features on the ground.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

Exploration/Settlement \_\_\_\_\_

Commerce \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1821-1866 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1840 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

n/a

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1821 with the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail, which likely passed through this site. By the 1840s this portion of the Santa Fe Trail was used by emigrants departing Westport, Missouri for Oregon and California. The period of significance ends in 1866 when the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail shifted to Junction City, Kansas, thus ending long-distance trail traffic east of this city.

Returned



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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

The Harmon Park Swale is associated with three great overland trails—the Santa Fe, the Oregon, and the California trails—as these three routes shared part of the same corridor in eastern Kansas. The swale is nationally significant as part of the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail and under Criterion D for its potential to yield information about commerce, migration, and wagon transportation in eastern Kansas. This swale is also nationally significant under Criteria A & D for its association with transportation and exploration/settlement along the Oregon and California trails. The site, which is now part of a public park, retains a good degree of integrity in terms of location, feeling, and association required for registration. Its period of significance begins in 1821 with the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail and ends in 1866 when the railroad reached Junction City, Kansas, thus eliminating long-distance trail traffic east of this city. The nominated site materially reflects important historic events associated with Oregon and California trails, as well as the Santa Fe Trail historic contexts International Trade on the Mexican Road, 1821-1846; The Mexican-American War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1848; Expanding National Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1848-1861; The Effects of the Civil War on the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880; and the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

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### Elaboration

Trails Overview<sup>9</sup>  
Revised

Soon after Mexican Independence in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail emerged as an international trade route linking the United States with Santa Fe in northern Mexico, and it crossed the entire length of the present-day state of Kansas. The majority of traffic along the trail, especially prior to 1848, consisted of civilian traders – Hispanic and American – with some military traffic and a few emigrants. Following US victory in the Mexican-American War in 1848, the United States' Territory of New Mexico was created. The focus of the trail at this time began to shift to domestic trade and communication across the expanding country. In addition, large quantities of military freight were shipped along the route to newly established forts in the southwest. Until the completion of a connecting railroad in 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was the major commercial route linking the eastern US with the American Southwest.<sup>10</sup>

The Oregon Trail began as a network of Indian trade and migration routes that crisscrossed the American West. British, French, and American fur trappers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries found and followed those paths as they scoured the country for beaver. By the 1820s, caravans of pack trains, carts, and wagons were beating a rough "fur trace" from the Missouri River to the annual trappers' rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains of today's Wyoming and northern Utah. Pack trails ran west from the Rockies, following the Snake and Columbia rivers to Hudson's Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

<sup>10</sup> For a complete history of the Santa Fe Trail, see *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, Amended* (Topeka: Kansas Historical Society, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> William E. Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848*, vol. 1, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 77, 80; Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*, vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific* (Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933), 52, 91, 105, 136, 149-154, 156-159; Bernard De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), 47, 59, 69; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*, (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 4; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1-5.



When the first family of covered wagon pioneers joined a fur caravan heading to the Rockies from Missouri in 1840, the Oregon Country was jointly occupied by the fledgling United States and powerful Great Britain. Over the next several years, Britain watched uneasily as a low but steady tide of American emigrants surged along the developing, 2200-mile Oregon Trail and emptied into the Pacific Northwest. As the number of American settlers grew, so did the pressure for British withdrawal. In 1846 the two nations signed a treaty giving the U.S. control of lands between California and the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, today's border between the United States and Canada.<sup>12</sup> The emigration swelled in the early 1850s as homesteaders flocked to Oregon to stake their claims under the Donation Lands Act. By 1860, some 53,000 covered wagon emigrants and hundreds of thousands of livestock had followed the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest.<sup>13</sup>

The California Trail, too, began at the Missouri River and stretched more than 2000 miles across plains and mountains, then branched out to end at various towns and camps in and beyond the Sierra Nevada. Much of that distance was part of a shared corridor with the Oregon Trail through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho. Near today's Soda Springs, Idaho, the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party split away from the Oregon Trail and turned south to blaze a new emigrant route across the unmapped Great Basin and along the Humboldt River to California, part of Mexico at that time. Against all odds, the entire party survived the trip, and some of the successful pioneers set to work recruiting other emigrants to California. A trickle of over-landers followed over the next several years, developing a more direct trail across Idaho and Nevada to the Humboldt River and better routes through the Sierra Nevada.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War and annexation of Texas, the United States gained a tremendous swath of territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico across the Southern Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin to the Pacific coast. Emigration to California continued at a dribble despite the change of government. Few Americans were tempted to make the arduous trip until news of the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill reached the East and opened the emigration floodgates. In the spring of 1850 some 44,000 Argonauts and entrepreneurs rushed along the California Trail to seek their fortunes in the gold camps. As a result of the influx, California gained statehood the following year, and by 1860 over 200,000 emigrants had followed the long trail west to the Golden State.<sup>15</sup>

Starting in 1847, Oregon- and California-bound travelers shared the trail corridor with some 60,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who followed the Mormon Trail across Nebraska and Wyoming to the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah. Total emigration along the multi-trail corridor to Oregon, California, and Utah between 1840, when the pioneer Joel Walker led his family west, and 1869, when completion of the transcontinental railroad brought the overland trails era to a close, is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.<sup>16</sup>

Across the three decades of the emigration, the trail experience evolved. As historian John Unruh observed, "The emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development."<sup>17</sup> In the 1840s, emigrants were on their own once they left Missouri and entered "Indian Territory." During those years, many suffered extreme hardship and even death as they trudged across Nevada's Forty-mile Desert, struggled through the Sierra Nevada, dodged the fierce rapids of the Columbia River, or tried untested new routes across

<sup>12</sup> Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

<sup>13</sup> John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 60, 84-85.

<sup>14</sup> George Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 18, 27-28; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991), 39, 125, 149; Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 67-78.

<sup>15</sup> Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; William E. Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*, vol. 2, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 15, 17-18, 388.

<sup>16</sup> Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Unruh, 321-322.

the western mountains and deserts. Military and trading posts were few along the way and usually had little food to spare; emigrants were unable to resupply if their provisions ran low. But as the emigration progressed, explorers, military expeditions, and other travelers gradually opened shorter, safer routes. Towns and road ranches sprang up along the way. Businessmen established ferries, bridges, and toll roads, hauled water into the desert to sell to thirsty travelers, and built trading posts where travelers could resupply or exchange worn out draft animals for fresh ones. Meanwhile, as the years passed, the vast buffalo herds that 1840s emigrants had encountered in eastern Nebraska retreated farther and farther west, dwindling to near-extinction; hungry campfires and livestock consumed the woodlands and grasslands along the trail; and once-friendly native peoples, alarmed by the never-ending march of emigrants and embittered by the usurping of their lands and resources, were driven to armed resistance. As a result of these changes, travelers of the 1860s experienced the overland trails much differently than those who had gone west in the 1840s.

Not just the experience but the trails themselves changed, as well. For example, Independence and Westport, Missouri, at the eastern edge of the frontier, were the original Oregon and California trailheads. There emigrants could purchase supplies, wagons, and livestock and make repairs before merging with the great freight caravans rolling west along the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas. Near the present-day town of Gardner, the Oregon-California trail corridor branched off to follow the "Independence Road" across northeastern Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and Fort Kearny, Nebraska, and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during those years, especially following outbreaks of cholera, emigrants began outfitting and "jumping off" onto the trails farther and farther north, gradually shifting the bulk of the emigration traffic upriver to Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha/Council Bluffs.

By the close of the 1850s, the Nebraska river towns had largely replaced Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth, and St. Joseph as outfitting and jumping-off places, and the flow of Oregon-California traffic across Kansas had nearly dried up.<sup>18</sup> Riding a steamboat up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs saved emigrants several difficult stream crossings and many days of driving across northeastern Kansas. Starting farther north also enabled travelers to avoid the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid-1850s and allowed them to take advantage of substantial trail improvements made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help its Mormon emigrants cross Nebraska.

Farther west, significant new alternates were developed, including Sublette's, Hudspeth's, and Goodale's cutoffs across Wyoming and Idaho, the difficult Hastings Cutoff through Utah's Wasatch Mountains and over the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Raft River route to the Humboldt, and several Oregon dry-land alternatives to the dangerous Columbia River passage. New wagon roads punched through the Sierra Nevada and commercial ferries, bridges, and other improvements increasingly aided the emigration as the years passed.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 was the greatest improvement to western emigration by far. The driving of the ceremonial golden spike that linked the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was a stake in the heart of the covered wagon era. The laborious, dangerous overland trip that once took five to six months, killed hundreds of thousands of draft animals, and tested the endurance of the most determined emigrants now could be made safely in a matter of weeks. Some emigrants who could not afford train passage continued to use the old Oregon and California trails, but long-distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, 104-105.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Hurlburt Scott, *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*, (Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958), 87-100, 122, 135.

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century emigration of hundreds of thousands of people, rich and poor, free and slave, along the Oregon and California trails is unparalleled in world history. The trails they traveled opened the door for the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, the transcontinental railroad, and parts of the modern interstate highway system, all of which followed the Oregon and California trails corridor. The overland emigration fulfilled the nation's "manifest destiny" to stretch from Atlantic to Pacific, spurred economic development and security, and directed the course of American history. At the same time, however, it disrupted hundreds of indigenous cultures, destroyed traditional lifeways that had developed over millennia, and contributed to extinctions and significant shifts in native plant and animal populations. Today's West is largely the product of the California and Oregon emigrations and the events that flowed from those movements. Extant trail remnants, including wagon swales and ruts, stream crossings, graves, campgrounds, and associated forts, are touchstones to that iconic place and period in the nation's history.

The national and regional significance of the Oregon and California trails has been identified through the work of many lay and professional historians and defined in numerous scholarly publications.<sup>20</sup> Congress designated the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in 1978 and 1992, respectively, and the National Park Service in 1998 published a combined comprehensive management and use plan/environmental impact statement for the Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

In Kansas, approximately 358 miles of wagon route are designated as being part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail; 165 miles are designated as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail, and 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail. Many more miles of historic wagon route, once traveled by emigrants to the far west, exist across Kansas, and many of these routes are currently under study for possible addition to the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails.

Harmon Park Swale

Travelers bound for Santa Fe, Oregon, and California shared the same routes through the Kansas City metropolitan area until the road to Oregon and California diverged from the road to Santa Fe near present-day Gardner, Kansas. Before approaching Gardner, travelers had a variety of smaller routes from which to choose to travel through the region.

Before Independence, Missouri became the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail in 1827-1828, most travelers heading west from the Franklin, Missouri area passed Fort Osage. From this fort, approximately 15 miles northeast of present-day Independence, travelers had two options (Figure 6). They could head south to the Blue Spring campground (present-day Blue Springs, Missouri, 17 miles south of Fort Osage); cross the Big Blue River at what is now 151<sup>st</sup> Street and State Line Road in south Kansas City, Missouri; and encamp at Lone Elm campground in present-day Olathe, Kansas before continuing to Gardner and eventually Santa Fe. The second, more popular, option was to head west and southwest out of Fort Osage to what became Independence; cross the Big Blue River in present-day Swope Park (in Kansas City, Missouri); and encamp at Elm Grove (also in present-day Olathe) before reaching Gardner.<sup>21</sup>

This second route left the State of Missouri at Nine Mile Point, so-called because it is nine miles below the Kansas River, and passed through the land in which the nominated swale is located. The first mention of this route was in September 1823 by surveyor Joseph Brown. He was tasked with surveying the western boundary of the State of Missouri in that year, erecting mounds or markers every mile along the state line.<sup>22</sup> Ten chains (660 feet) south of the nine mile mark, Brown wrote, "To a trace leading from Fort Osage toward Santa Fe...."<sup>23</sup> Modern-day calculations put this trace at 79<sup>th</sup> Street in Prairie Village, due east of Harmon Park.

<sup>20</sup> See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Crease, "Trace of the Blues: The Santa Fe Trail, the Blue River, and the True Nature of the Old Trace in Metropolitan Kansas City," *Wagon Tracks* 11 (August 1997): 9, 14. This article analyzes the early routes through the Kansas City area before Independence and Westport became established termini.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Brown, as quoted in Crease, "Trace of the Blues...", 12.



That Brown mentioned the road going to Santa Fe indicates this route was already in use prior to his 1823 survey.

Between 1825 and 1827, Brown was the lead surveyor of the Sibley Survey. George Sibley, Joseph Brown, and the rest of the survey expedition were tasked with surveying the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Osage to the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian, which marked the boundary between the United States and Mexico prior to the Mexican-American War in the 1840s.<sup>24</sup> Brown's map and the accompanying field notes indicate the expedition team crossed the state line at Nine Mile Point (Figure 7).<sup>25</sup> Travelers continued crossing the state line at this location until at least 1839.<sup>26</sup>

By the mid-1840s, Westport rivaled Independence as an eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail, making necessary a new route straight south out of Westport that connected with the previously-established trail. By this time, as well, emigrants used both Westport and Independence as outfitting points for their journeys to Oregon and California territories, using portions of the routes through the Kansas City area previously created by Santa Fe Trail traffic. The new route out of Westport caused the gradual shift of the state line crossing, which "worked its way north, so that by the early 1850s the route that ran south out of Westport crossed over a mile north [of Nine Mile Point] at about present 69<sup>th</sup> St..."<sup>27</sup> (Figure 8). It was about this time that the commonly-accepted routes through the Kansas City area were firmly established.<sup>28</sup>

The trail remnant in Harmon Park was created by some of the earliest Santa Fe traders heading west from Independence, but this site saw the bulk of its traffic headed to and from Westport after it became an outfitting location in 1840. Though the crossing of the state line shifted north, the route through Harmon Park remained unchanged, as is evidenced by the General Land Office survey in 1856 (Figure 9).

The Civil War, and the events leading up to it, interrupted travel to and from the Kansas City area. By 1860, emigrants using the Oregon and California trails were departing from river towns along the Iowa-Nebraska border. Between 1861 and 1864, Santa Fe traffic avoided Kansas City altogether by using Fort Leavenworth as a starting point. In 1865, Westport regained its status as the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail. This status was short-lived, however, as in June 1866 the Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division (later known as the Kansas Pacific), reached Junction City, Kansas. The majority of Santa Fe freight was then transported to this town by railroad; thus, long-distance trail traffic came to an end east of Junction City in that year.

#### Archeological Potential

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail segments have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. Though no such surveys have been undertaken on this trail segment, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This segment and its immediate landscape have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of the trail from Westport to Elm Grove Campground, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swales and adjacent

<sup>24</sup> Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 123. Eventually, the survey expedition crossed the Arkansas River near Chouteau's Island (no longer extant) in present-day Kearny County, Kansas and headed south to Taos.

<sup>25</sup> "Field Book Page 10," in L. Stephen Schmidt and Richard Hayden, "Appendix A: Text of Field Book," *The Survey and Maps of the Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827*, Santa Fe Trail Association Grant Report (August 2011): 25 [electronic copy on-line]; available from *Santa Fe Trail Association Online*, < [http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix_A.pdf) > (accessed 27 August 2013)

<sup>26</sup> Crease, "Trace of the Blues," 14.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century trade and economic development. Further investigation could address key questions regarding trade and transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played by the military, various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.<sup>29</sup>

Returned

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<sup>29</sup> "Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail," F116. Citation covers paragraph.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_ n/a \_\_\_\_\_



**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.28  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates** (These coordinates are for the swale itself)  
Datum = WGS84

A	<u>38.987803</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632947</u> Longitude	C	<u>38.987340</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633236</u> Longitude
B	<u>38.987723</u> Latitude	<u>-94.632864</u> Longitude	D	<u>38.987411</u> Latitude	<u>-94.633319</u> Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated 2.28-acre site is located in a 24,690 square feet tract of land in the SE¼ of Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East described as "Prairie Village Municipal Office Complex Tract 1 Lying Within Said." The property is a small intact swale in a maintained park, bounded on all sides by areas of recent disturbance (primarily residential and commercial development). Mowed lawns with no discernible trail remains are located on the north, east, and west sides. While irregular depressions are situated in nearby areas of the park, none appear to represent the remains of intact trail-related features.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries were selected so as to encompass the visible trail swale, as well as a 50-meter (164-foot) buffer on the southwest, southeast, and northeast sides of the swale, as specified in the MPS. The boundary stops at the sidewalk and kiosk adjacent to the northwest side of the swale.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title KSHS Staff  
organization Kansas Historical Society date Summer 2013  
street & number 6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue telephone (785) 272-8681  
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66615  
e-mail cultural\_resources@kshs.org

Returned

Harmon Park Swale  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Kansas  
County and State

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Historic images, maps, etc.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Harmon Park Swale  
**City or Vicinity:** Prairie Village  
**County/State:** Johnson County, Kansas  
**Photographer:** Rick Anderson  
**Date of Photos:** 27 August 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 6: Looking SW along swale.
- 2 of 6: Looking SW along swale from near the NE end of site.
- 3 of 6: Looking SW along swale from near the middle end of swale.
- 4 of 6: Looking S across swale.
- 5 of 6: Looking S across swale.
- 6 of 6: Looking NE along swale from the SW end of site.

Returned

**Property Owner:**

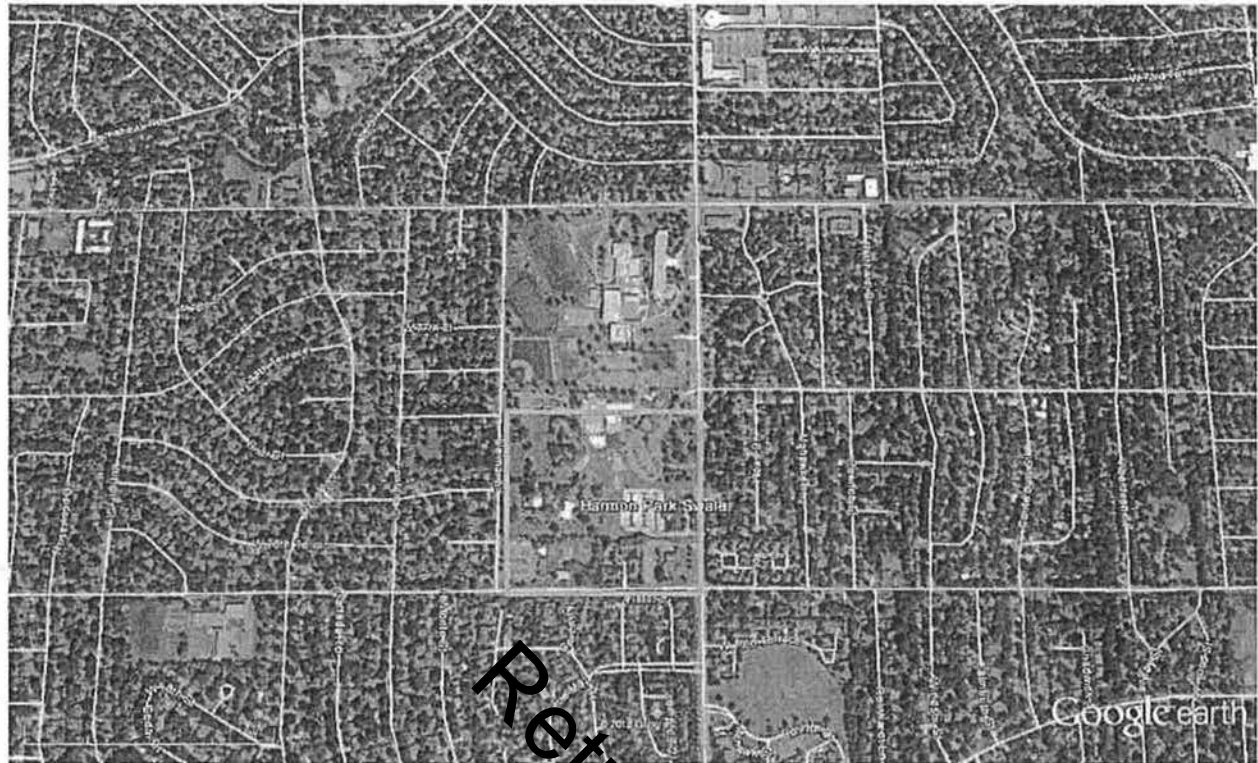
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name City of Prairie Village  
street & number 7700 Mission Road telephone (913) 381-6464  
city or town Prairie Village state KS 66208 zip code

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1. Aerial image of area surrounding Austin Harmon Park (in box).



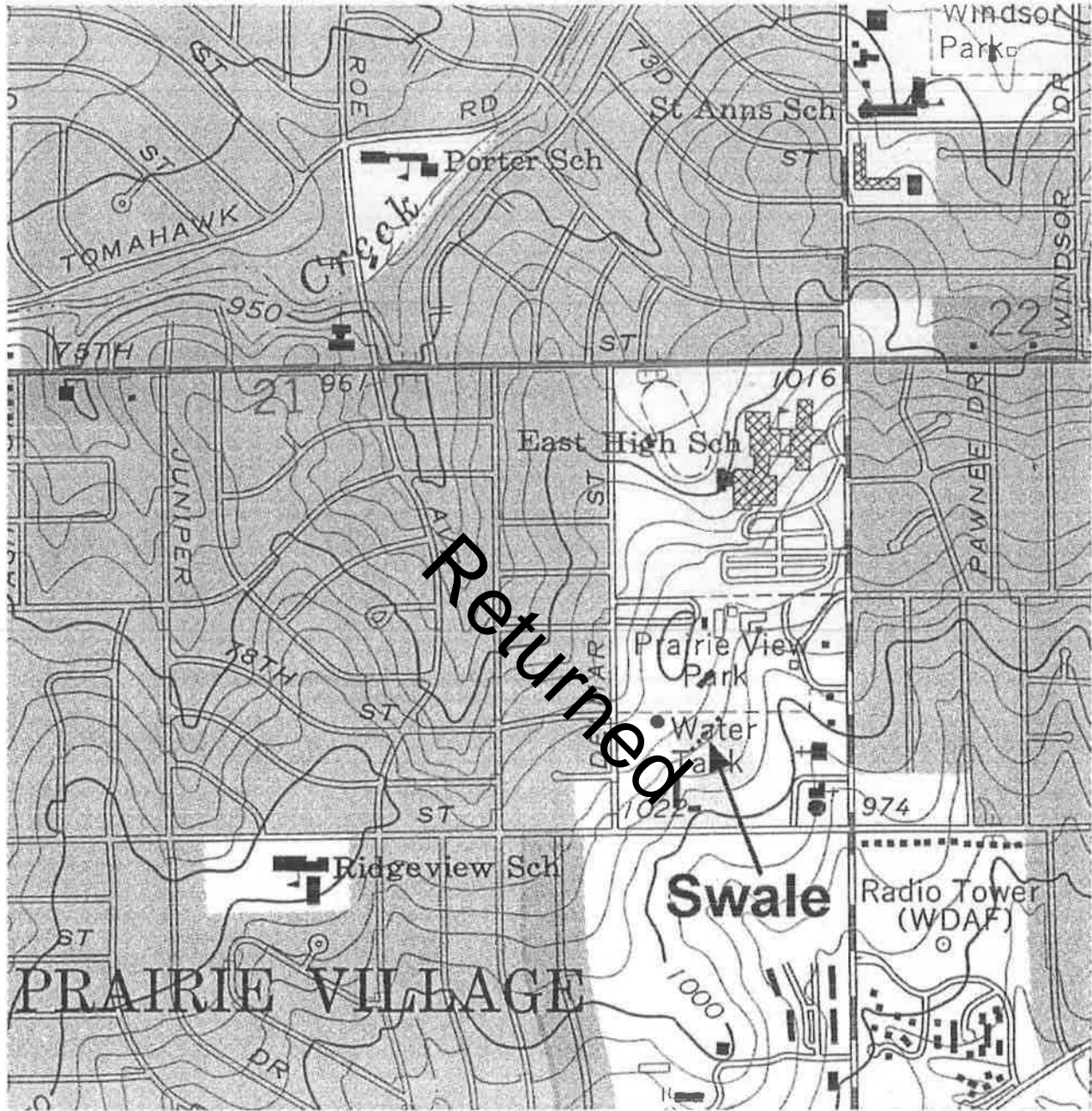
Google earth

feet | 4000  
km | 1



Returned

Figure 2. Location of the Harmon Park Swale.  
Prairie Village Kansas: (U.S.G.S. 7.5' Lenexa Quadrangle Map)





**Figure 3.** Aerial view of the Harmon Park Swale, showing the swale area and adjacent sidewalk/interpretive kiosk. (2012 Google Imagery); north is up; no scale.

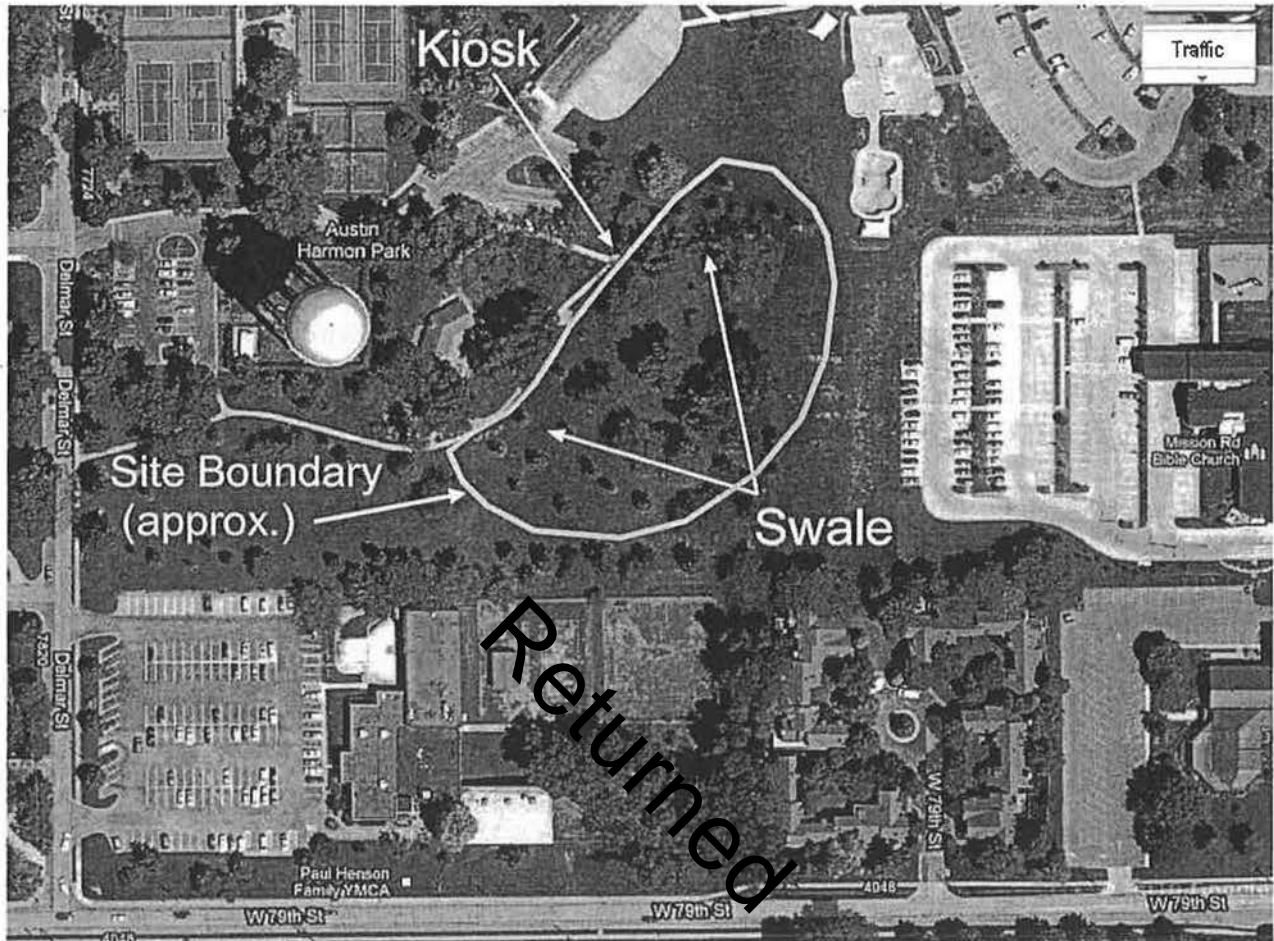
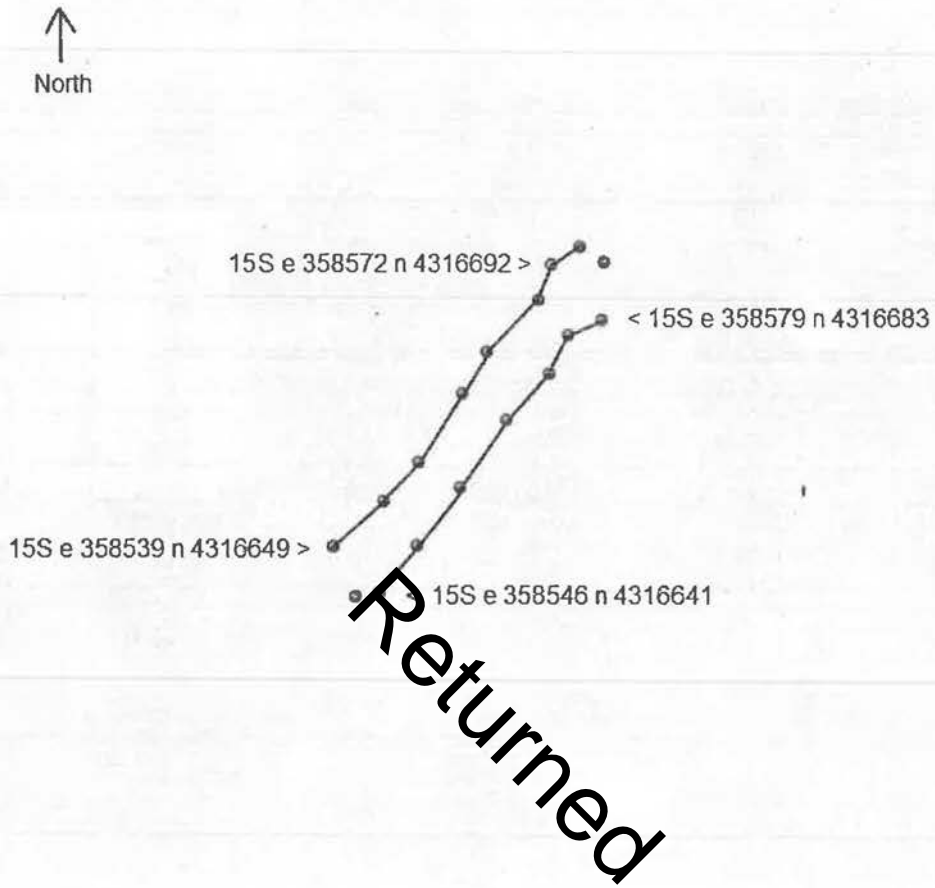
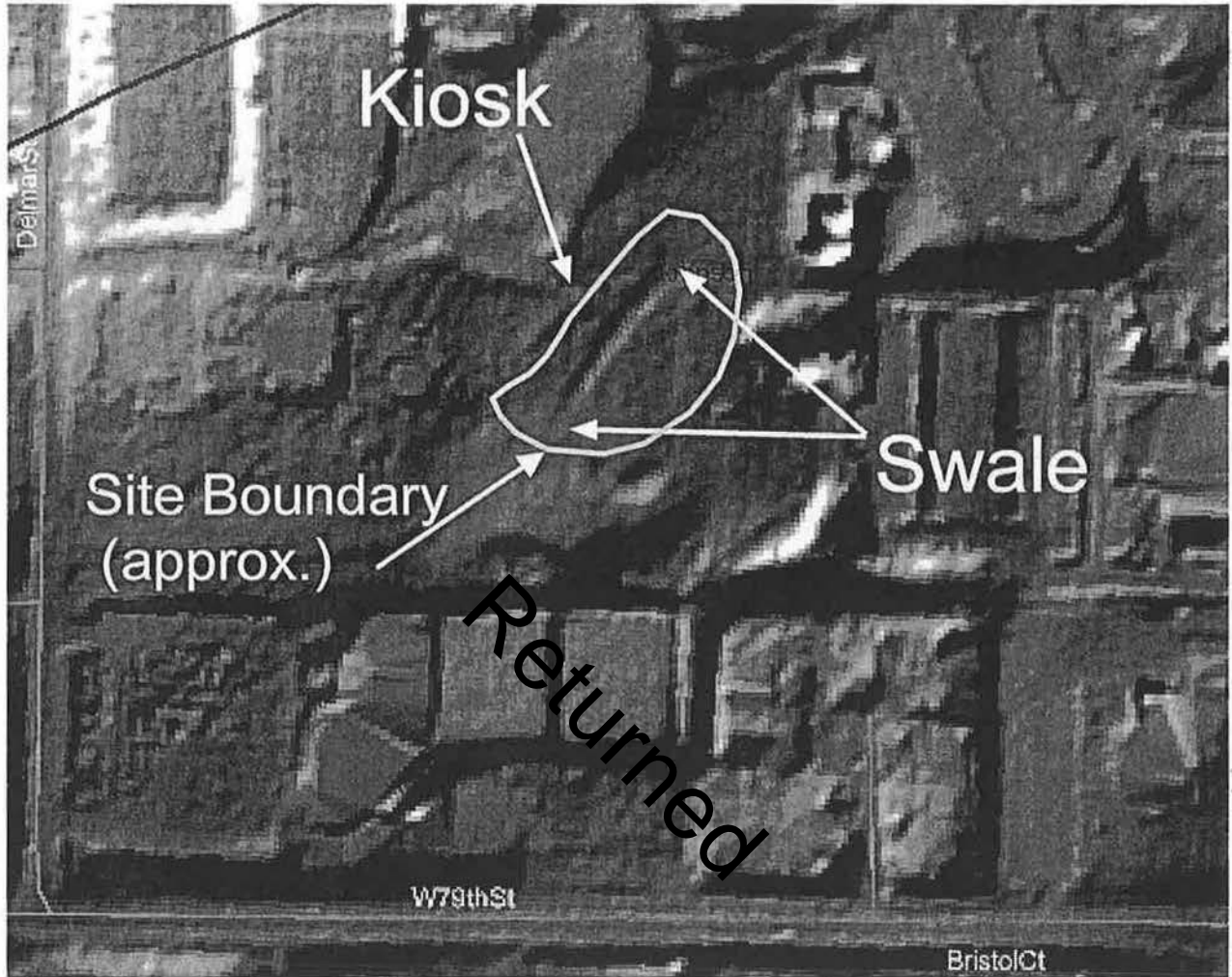


Figure 4. GPS Coordinates of the Harmon Park Swale (NAD83).



**Figure 5.** 2006 LiDAR imagery showing the Harmon Park Swale and adjacent sidewalk/interpretive kiosk.  
North is up; no scale.



**Figure 6.** The Santa Fe Trail through the Kansas City metropolitan area 1821-1827, as delineated by Craig Crease. Source: Hal Jackson, "The Santa Fe Trail in the Kansas City Area: Evolution of the Landscape," *Wagon Tracks* 15 (February 2001): 8.

Arrow indicates location of Harmon Park Swale.

(Note: Round Grove Campground is incorrectly labeled on this map.)

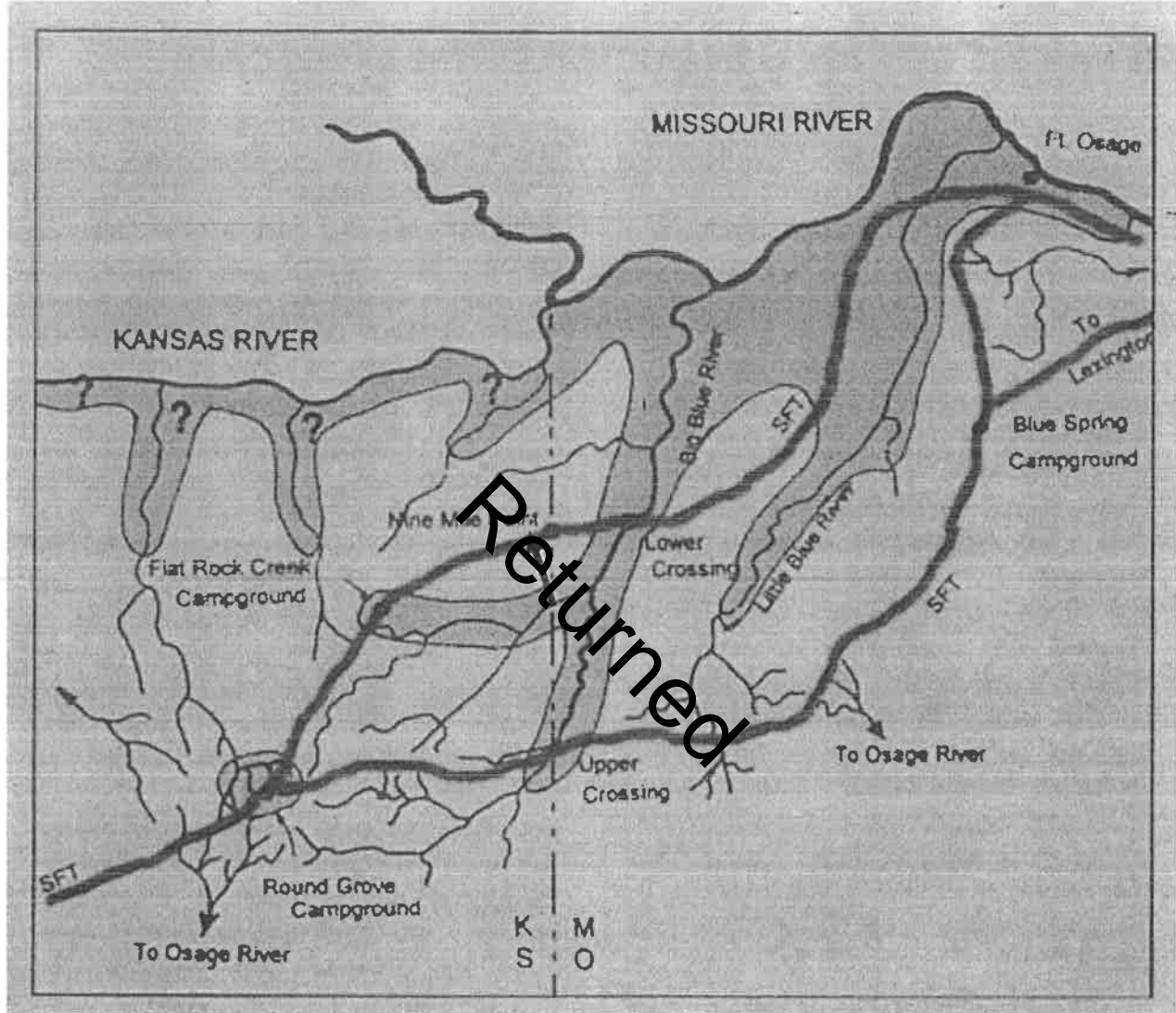
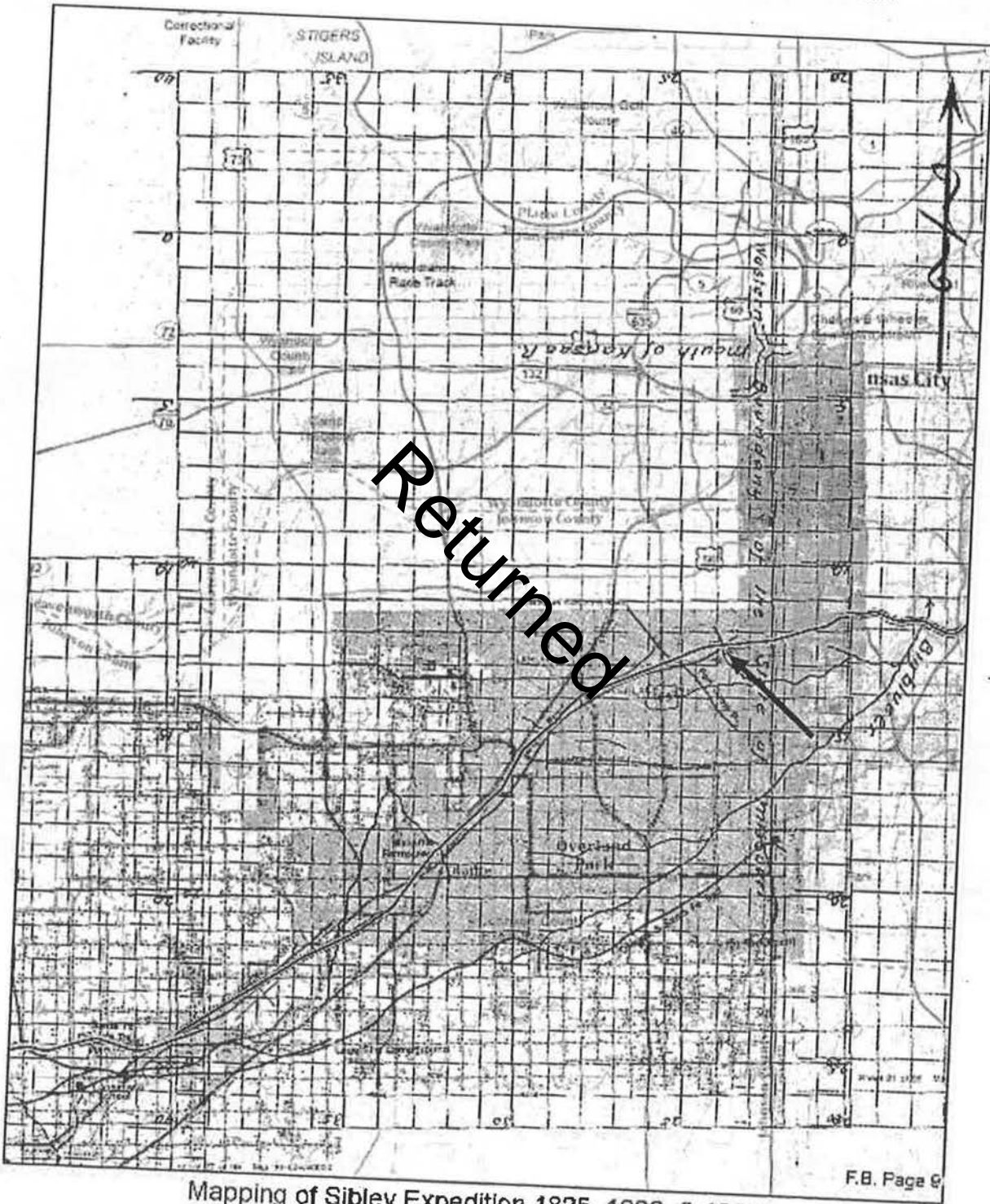




Figure 7. "Field Book Page 9," in Schmidt and Hayden, "Appendix G: Plots of the Survey Route on Modern Maps," *The Survey and Maps of the Sibley Expedition 1825, 1826, & 1827*, Santa Fe Trail Association Grant Report (August 2011): n.p. [electronic copy on-line]; available from *Santa Fe Trail Association Online*, < [http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix\\_G.pdf](http://www.santafetrail.org/about-us/scholarly-research/sibley-survey/Appendix_G.pdf) > (accessed 27 August 2013). Arrow indicates location of Harmon Park.



0 1 2 4 6 8  
Miles

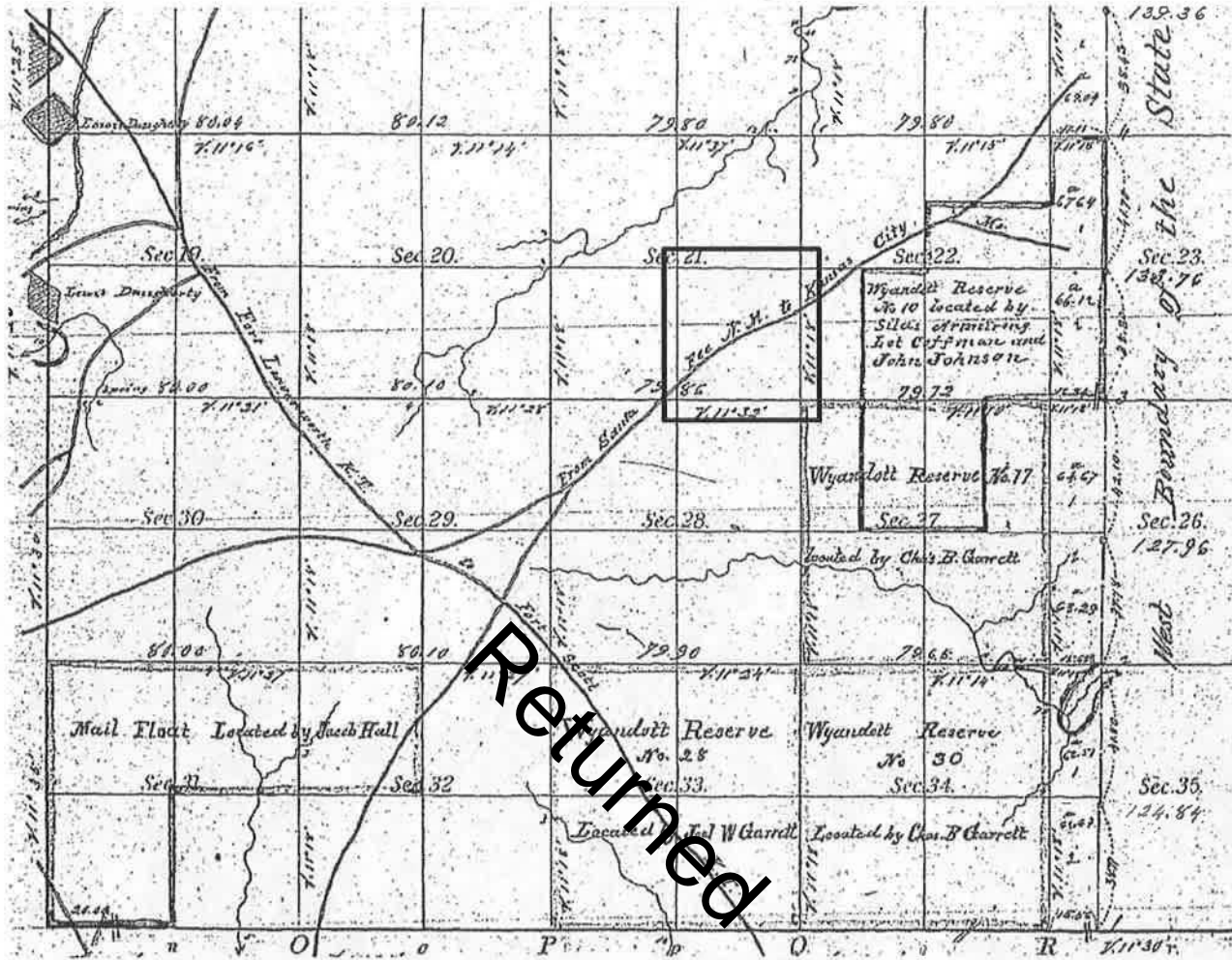
Santa Fe Trail Association - SFTA  
by L. Stephen Schmidt, Richard Hayden - August 2011

**Figure 8.** This map represents the paths of the Santa Fe and California National Historic trails as mapped by the National Park Service. The approximate path used by early travelers in relation to the nominated site is also represented.





Figure 9. Partial 1856 General Land Office (GLO) survey map, showing Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 25 East where Harmon Park is now located.



Boundary Map.



1:3,000



Harmon Park Swale  
Prairie Village, Johnson County, Kansas

Nominated site is within hatched area.  
Black dots represent the four "corners" of the visible swale.  
1856 GLO survey line is to the northwest of the site.

Site Coordinates (Map Datum = WGS84):  
A: 38.987803,-94.632947 / B: 38.987723,-94.632864  
C: 38.987340,-94.633236 / D: 38.987411,-94.633319

Total acreage of site: 2.28 acres





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination 12/4/2013 Return  
Property Name: Harmon Park Swale  
Multiple Name: Santa Fe Trail MPS  
State & County: KANSAS, Johnson

Date Received: 10/18/2013 Date of Pending List: 11/29/2013 Date of 16th Day: 12/4/2013 Date of 45th Day: 12/4/2013 Date of Weekly List: 12/4/2013

Reference number: 13000880

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL                | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource     | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG                 |   |

Accept  Return  Reject 12/4/2013 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Harmon Park Swale nomination was returned because of procedural error. The KSSHPO cannot ask for a Determination of Eligibility in this case.

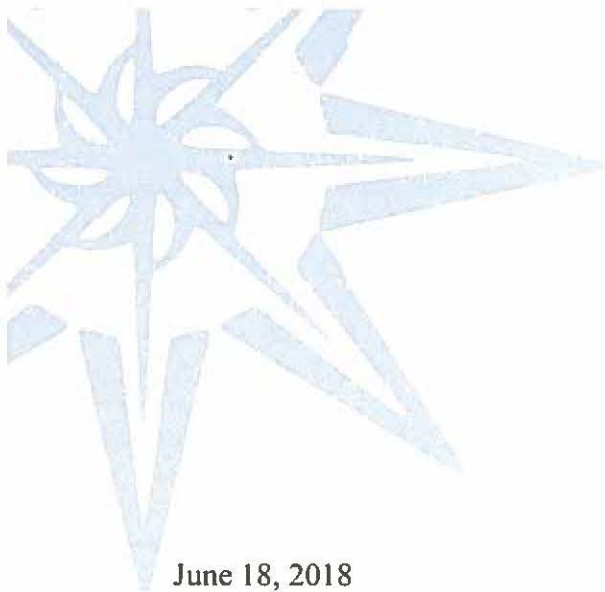
Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy  Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date 12/4/2013

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE CITY OF PRAIRIE VILLAGE  
STAR OF KANSAS

June 18, 2018

Amanda K. Loughlin  
Kansas Historical Society  
6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66615

Ms. Loughlin,

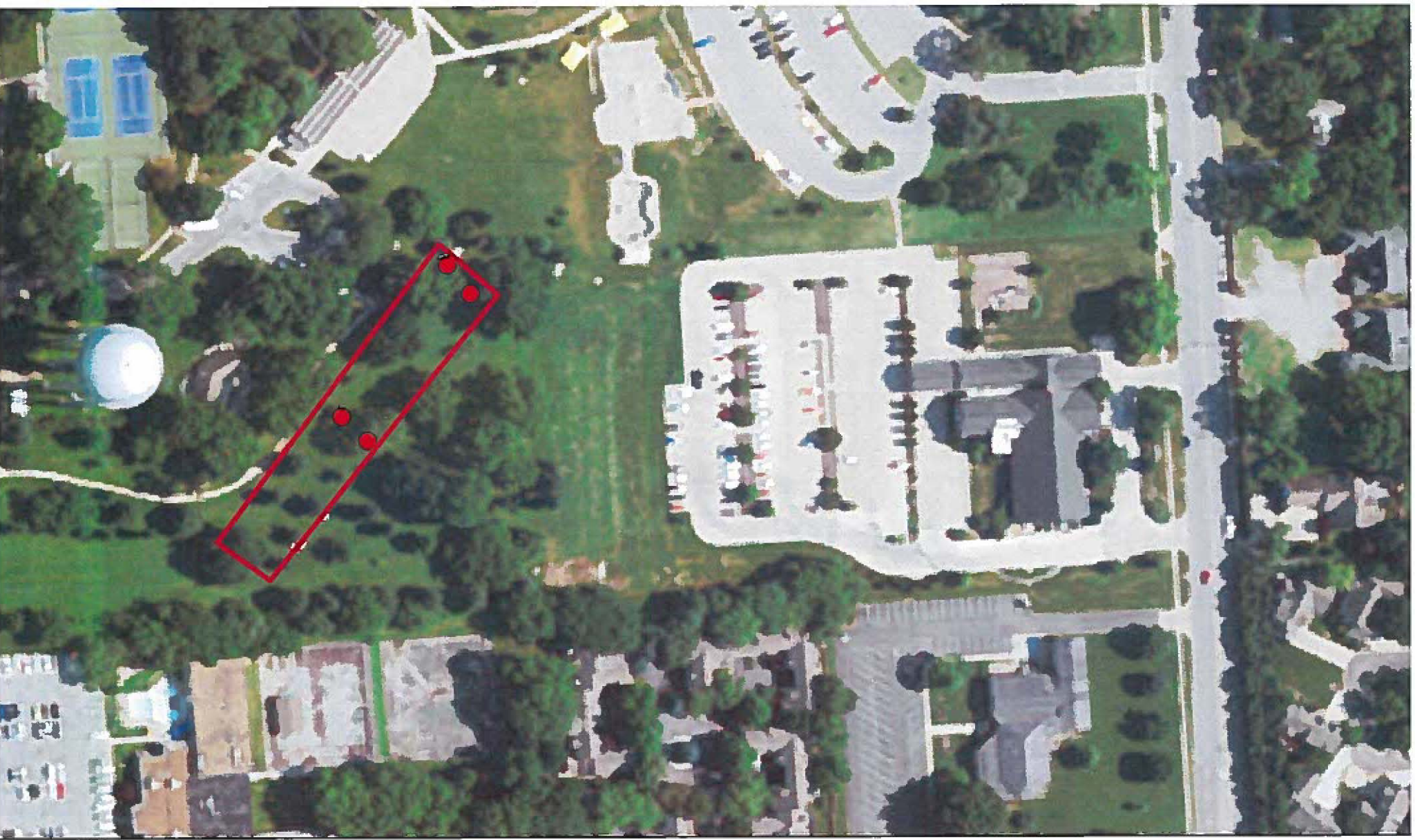
At the June 4 Council meeting, the Prairie Village City Council voted in favor of listing the Harmon Park Swale in the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National Register of Historic Places by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office. The City no longer objects and supports the nomination of the Swale per the boundary provided by the City.

On behalf of the City of Prairie Village City Council and the Parks & Recreation Committee, thank you for all your assistance throughout this process.

Sincerely,

Laura Wassmer  
Mayor





0 62.5 125 250 375 500 Feet

0 25 50 100 150 200 Meters







6425 SW 6th Avenue  
Topeka KS 66615-1099



Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D.  
Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

August 6, 2018

Dr. Julie Ernstein, Acting Chief  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240

Re: National Register documents for Kansas

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

Please find enclosed the following National Register documents:  
*NEW NOMINATIONS in Certified Local Government (7)*

- **Casson Building; Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination and a PDF of letter of support and Part 1 approval;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.
  
- **Western Union Building; Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination and a PDF of letter of support and Part 1 approval;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.
  
- **Pioneer Log Cabin; Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination and a PDF letter of support;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.
  
- **St. John's Hospital; Salina, Saline County, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination's first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination, a PDF with letter of support, and a PDF of notarized letter of objection from owner of Medialle Center and copy of Part 1 approval;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs

- **Marion Springs School; Baldwin City vicinity, Douglas County, Kansas** (new nomination under “Historic Public Schools of Kansas” MPS)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination’s first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.
- **Appanoose Church of the Brethren & Cemetery; Overbrook vicinity, Franklin & Douglas counties, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination’s first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination, a PDF of letters of support, and .kmz file;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs
- **Willow Springs Santa Fe Trail Historic District; Baldwin City vicinity, Douglas County, Kansas** (new nomination under “Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail” MPS)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination’s first page;
  - 1 DVD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination and .kmz file;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.

NEW NOMINATION in non-CLG communities (1)

- **Dunlap Colored Cemetery; Dunlap vicinity, Morris County, Kansas** (new nomination)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination’s first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination and a letter of support;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.

RESUBMITTED NOMINATION (1)

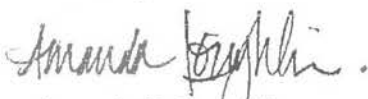
- **Harmon Park Swale; Prairic Village, Johnson County, Kansas** (resubmitted nomination) (NRIS #13000880)
  - Physical, signed copy of the nomination’s first page;
  - 1 DVD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the nomination , a PDF letter of support, and a .kmz file;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photographs.

REMOVAL REQUEST (1)

- **Lyons High School; Lyons, Rice County, Kansas** (additional documentation; removal request)
  - Physical, signed copy of the documentation’s first page;
  - 1 CD (disk #1) with a PDF of the true and correct copy of the documentation;
  - 1 CD (disk #2) with photograph.

If you have any questions about these enclosed items, please contact Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at ext. 217 or [Patrick.Zollner@ks.gov](mailto:Patrick.Zollner@ks.gov).

Sincerely,



Amanda K. Loughlin  
National Register Coordinator  
Kansas State Historic Preservation Office