

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

**NRIS Reference Number: 97000734**

**Date Listed: 7/15/97**

**Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Property Name**

**Dona Ana  
County**

**NM  
State**

Historic Highway Bridges of NM  
**Multiple Name**

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**This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.**

*Beth Boland*  
**Signature of the Keeper**

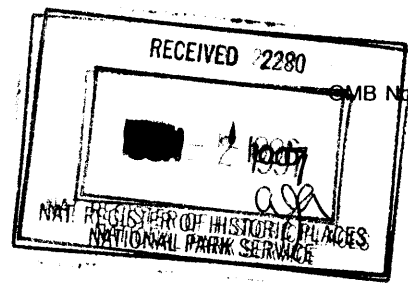
*7/22/97*  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Although the historic context in the cover documentation covers a period extending until 1965, the period of significance for this bridge is its date of construction. The period of significance is 1933. This was confirmed by Mary Ann Anders of the NM SHPO.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs

other names/site number NMSHTD # 2591

2. Location

street & number NM 185, 1 M. S of Radium Springs  not for publication

city or town Radium Springs  vicinity

state New Mexico code NM county Dona Ana code 013 zip code 88054

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Lyn Sebastian* 3490 5-28-97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*Beth Boland*

7/15/97

Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Name of Property

Dona Ana, NM  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Highway Bridge Construction in NM

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Transportation: road-related

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

Transportation: road-related

**7. Description**

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

Timber beam

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation timber

walls timber

roof

other asphalt

**Narrative Description**

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

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

engineering

Period of Significance

1933-1965

Significant Dates

1933

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Name of Property

Dona Ana, NM  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	3	3	1	9	1	8	0	3	5	9	5	7	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

  
2 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

3 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

  
4 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

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

#### Boundary Justification

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

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Kammer, Ph.D.  
organization contract historian date Dec., 1996  
street & number 521 Aliso Dr. NE telephone (505) 266-0586  
city or town Albuquerque state NM zip code 87108

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

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

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

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

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

#### Property Owner

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

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ 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. 470 *et seq.*).

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

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National Park Service

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Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Dona Ana County, NM

Description

The Rio Grande Bridge near Radium Springs, located on NM 185 one mile south of the community and one-half mile north of Ft. Selden State Monument, is a 19-span timber beam bridge built in 1933. The bridge crosses the Rio Grande as it flows in a now well-defined channel some forty miles below Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams.

The substructure consists of 18 creosote-treated timber piers, or bents, each containing seven piles stiffened with diagonal timbers, or sways. The bents measure approximately 12 feet from the waterway to the deck. Timber abutments, protected by steel bulkheads, are located beneath each of the approaches. The superstructure consists of 19 spans, each measuring 25 feet in length. The deck, consisting of a 2"x4" timbers with an asphalt surface, rests on steel stringers. The roadway is 475 feet long and 29 feet wide and is flanked by timber felloes. The bridge's timber rails are lined with metal guardrails.

The bridge retains a high degree of integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship and association. Alterations include the addition of the steel bulkheads protecting the timber abutments, an additional pile to each bent to widen the roadway, and the installation of the metal guardrails.

Statement of Significance

Well-preserved and serving local traffic in the agricultural communities of the upper Mesilla Valley, the Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs is significant for its long association with highway transportation in New Mexico dating to the 1930s. Listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties in 1977 and one of the highest rated bridges of its type in the 1987 bridge survey, it is significant as one of the best examples of its type, embodying the design, materials and methods of construction associated with the timber and beam bridge sub-type.

During the 1920s and 1930s as the highway department sought to complete the first phase of the state's modern road system by connecting all of the principle communities of the state, engineers found that the timber beam bridge design offered an

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Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Dona Ana County, NM

Statement of Significance (continued)

inexpensive and easily maintained bridge type for crossing many of the state's arroyos and waterways. Although many of the bridges constructed using this design were relatively small, limited to a few spans, in southern New Mexico below the dams that controlled the flow of the Rio Grande the bridge design proved advantageous for the frequent crossings highways made over the river. Faced with constructing several crossings along U.S. 85, previously designated as the Camino Real Highway and NM 1, engineers relied on the timber beam bridge design. Their confidence derived, in part, from knowing that the upstream dams and irrigation district canals sufficiently regulated the flow of water, limiting flooding and the possibility of the waterway overflowing its channel.

Typically, these timber beam bridges were constructed with 25-foot spans and rested on substructures of pile-driven bents. Unlike the state's earliest timber beam bridges, those of the 1920s and 1930s were constructed with creosote-treated timber to prolong the life of the bridge. Later, as vehicles increased in size and weight, engineers often added an additional pile to each bent which permitted them to widen the roadway. Such improvements could easily be carried out by highway department crews, another advantage the bridge design offered. The Rio Grande Bridge near Radium Springs, constructed under FAP 107-A, typifies the design and subsequent alterations associated with this bridge design. As the norm for roadway widths changed from 18 to 24 feet by the mid-1930s, workers were easily able to drive additional piles to widen the bents, add an additional steel I-beam, and then widen the deck to improve the safety and efficiency of the bridge.

The setting of the bridge over the Rio Grande with its embankments protecting nearby farmland imbues the bridge with a strong feeling of its historic appearance and the role it played in transforming the state's early Camino Real Highway into a component of the modern federal highway system, U.S. 85.

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Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs  
Dona Ana County, NM

Bibliography

New Mexico State Highway Department. "Bridge Department  
Structure Report, Bridge No. 2591," Feb. 23, 1940

Van De Greyn, E.B. "New Mexico's Experience with Treated Timber  
Highway Bridges." New Mexico Highway Journal, Vol 6. No. 2  
(February, 1928), pp. 7-9.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is a rectangular parcel measuring approximately  
475 x 30 feet.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the bridge's substructure and  
superstructure which comprise the historic bridge.