

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: 97000740

Date Listed: 7/15/97

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
Property Name

San Juan
County

NM
State

Historic Highway Bridges of NM
Multiple Name

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

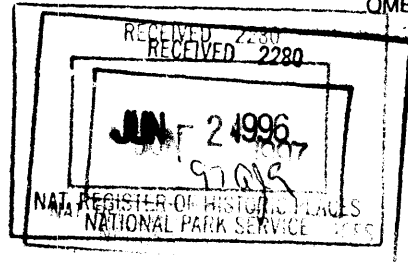
7/27/97
Date of Action

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 1937. This was confirmed by Mary Ann Anders of the NM SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

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



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 San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
other names/site number NMSHTD # 1792

2. Location

street & number U.S. 666 and 64, .5 M. W of Shiprock not for publication
city or town Shiprock vicinity
state New Mexico code NM county San Juan code 045 zip code 87420

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.)
Ry Sebastian SHPO 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 Beth Boland Date of Action 7/15/97

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
Name of Property

San Juan, 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.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Highway Bridge Construction in NM

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)

Parker Through truss

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls steel

roof _____

other concrete

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.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

transportation

engineering

Period of Significance

1937-1965

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

N/A

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:

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
Name of Property

San Juan, NM
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	2	7	0	5	9	6	0	4	0	7	2	8	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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7,8 Page 1

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
San Juan County, NM

Description

The San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock, located on U.S. 64 and 666 one-half mile southwest of Shiprock and the eastern junction of the two highways, is a six-span steel structure fabricated by W.E. Bondurant in 1937. It is set at a traditional crossing site across the broad floodplain of the San Juan River. Since the late 1950s when a steel beam bridge was constructed parallel to the structure, it has carried westbound traffic. The substructure consists of five dumbbell-style concrete piers, measuring from 33 to 48 feet in height, and two concrete abutments.

The bridge employs a Parker through truss design with each of the six spans measuring 167 feet in length. Each of the spans consists of seven panels measuring approximately 24 feet in length and each with its top chord at a different angle, shaping the polygonal top chord characteristic of Parker truss design bridges. All of the heavy steel truss members are riveted to the top and bottom chords. The deck consists of concrete and rests on steel stringers and crossbeams. The bridge is 1,007 feet in length and the deck is 24 feet wide. Steel guardrails flank the roadway, and a sidewalk, six feet wide and with a steel balustrade, extends along the west side on the outside of the truss panels. The bridge's nameplates noting the project, FAP 147-B REO; Governor Tingley and members of the 1937 State Highway Commission; and Grover E. Conroy, the State Highway Engineer, are located at the south endpost.

Although the bridge was refurbished in 1958 and carries gas and water pipes on the outside of its superstructure parallel to its lower chords, it retains a high degree of integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship and association.

Statement of Significance

Well-preserved and serving the heavy traffic flow of two federal highways, the San Juan Bridge at Shiprock is significant for its long association with highway transportation in New Mexico dating to the late 1930s. The longest bridge in New Mexico employing a Parker through truss design and one of the highest rated in the 1987 bridge survey of 11 remaining bridges

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
San Juan County, NM

Statement of Significance (continued)

of its type, it is also significant for embodying the design, materials and methods of construction associated with that bridge sub-type.

The San Juan River, which carries a greater volume of water than any river flowing through the state, courses through a broad floodplain near Shiprock. Since the Shiprock Agency served as a major administrative center for the northeastern region of the Navajo Reservation since before the turn of the century, the river had been a barrier dividing the agency from its Navajo clients living to the south and west. The river was also a barrier to expanded automobile travel into the Four Corners region. In 1914, two years after statehood, Governor William MacDonald and State Engineer James A. French travelled to the area, taking a train from Santa Fe to Gallup and then motoring to Shiprock, where they were ferried across the San Juan River, as they travelled on to Farmington. The experience reinforced French's recognition that better roads were necessary to connect the area to the rest of New Mexico, and by 1917 a single-span through truss bridge had been constructed across the river approximately 100 yards downstream from the present crossing.

Threatened by seasonal floods and inadequate for carrying the faster and heavier traffic that travelled the region's roads by the 1930s, the bridge became a candidate for replacement. Negotiations between Indian Service and the State Highway Commission went on for several years in the mid-1930s until the commission agreed to include the project in its 1937 budget. The project was funded under FAP 147-B REO and the contract awarded to W.E. Bondurant of Roswell. Contracting at the same time to replace a long railroad overpass with a timber deck on Coal Avenue in Albuquerque, Bondurant proposed using those timbers on the deck of the new structure to cut costs. The commission rejected his proposal, opting instead for a costlier, but longer-lasting concrete deck.

The selection of the Parker through truss design reflected the highway department's partiality to that design in its major projects of the late 1920s and 1930s. In order to compensate for the broad floodplain and the history of bridge washouts along the San Juan River, engineers designed the bridge to extend over

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8,9,10 Page 3

San Juan River Bridge at Shiprock
San Juan County, NM

Statement of Significance (continued)

1,000 feet, thus locating the abutments well up on the river bank where their likelihood of sustaining damage through scouring was minimal. The completed structure was, by far, the longest bridge completed in New Mexico, a status it retained until the completion of the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge in 1965.

The setting of the bridge over the broad floodplain of the San Juan River conveys a strong feeling of how truss bridges appeared along New Mexican highways prior to World War II. Its massive six-span superstructure, in marked relief to the newer steel beam bridge paralleling it, stands as a reminder of how the highway department's efforts to construct modern highways and bridges extended to what, two decades earlier, had been perceived as one of the most isolated regions of the state. In 1977 the property was listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties.

Bibliography

New Mexico State Highway Department. "Bridge Department Structure Report, Bridge No. 1792," June 1, 1937.

New Mexico State Highway Commission Minutes. August 30, 1935, p. 117; September 20, 1935, p. 122; December 20, 1935, p. 139; May 26, 1936, pp. 273-274.

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is a rectangular parcel measuring approximately 1,007 x 30 feet.

Boundary Justification

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