

MP 2660



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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name County Line Bridge
Other names/site number Niobrara River Bridge; CE00-020
Name of related multiple property listing Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number Private road over Niobrara River
City or town Valentine State Nebraska County Cherry
Not for publication Vicinity

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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

[Signature] SHPO/Director 5/22/18 Date
Signature of certifying official>Title: _____
Nebraska 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 of 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] 7-13-2018
Signature of Keeper Date of Action
fn

County Line Bridge
Name of Property

Cherry County, Nebraska
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 | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| _____ | _____ | Buildings |
| _____ | _____ | Sites |
| 1 | _____ | Structures |
| _____ | _____ | Objects |
| 1 | _____ | Total |

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.)

OTHER/Pratt through truss

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Steel (truss); timber (bridge deck); concrete & steel (abutments)

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property**County and State****Description**

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The County Line Bridge is a Pratt through truss bridge over the Niobrara River in eastern Cherry County in north central Nebraska. At the time of its 1916 construction it was situated on a lightly used rural road; today the road is non-extant. The bridge is now privately owned, a different citizen owns the land to the north of the river, and the land to the south is held by the Nature Conservancy. The bridge contains a single span of 120 feet and width of approximately 14 feet. The bridge deck is divided into seven sections covered by timber planks. The bridge retains all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

Although it does not connect Cherry County to neighboring Keya Paha County or Brown County, the bridge derives its name from its close proximity to the tri-county intersection. The bridge runs northeast-southwest between Sparks River Road, which connects Cherry and Keya Paha counties, and a now private road that connects Cherry and Brown counties. The closest river crossing to the northwest is nearly 4 miles; to the southeast nearly 10 miles.

In 1991 the Nebraska Department of Roads (now Nebraska Department of Transportation) prepared HABS/HAER Inventory forms on the State's historic highway bridges. Regarding the County Line Bridge:

span number: 1

span length: (west) 120.0'

superstructure: steel, 7-panel, pin-connected Pratt through truss

substructure: concrete abutment extended from steel cylinders (east); steel pile bents with sheet piling

total length: 120.0'

roadway wdt.: 14.0'

floor/decking: timber deck over steel stringers

other features: upper chord: 2 channels with cover plate and lacing; lower chord: 2 rectangular looped eyebars; vertical: 2 channels with lacing, 1 looped square looped eyebar at hip; diagonal: 2 rectangular looped eyebars; counter: 1 square looped eyebar with turnbuckle; lateral bracing: round bar with threaded ends; strut: 2 angles; floor beam: I-beam, field bolted to vertical; guardrail: 2 angles; Canton Bridge Company builder's plate removed¹

The physical description as recorded in 1991 is still accurate. The only change of note is the deterioration of a few of the deck timbers. The areas of deterioration have been covered with sheet metal that has been nailed down to allow for the bridge to be traversed safely.

The bridge is one of fifteen spans over the Niobrara National Scenic River, administered by the National Park Service. In 1991 Congress established the park as seventy-six miles of "... Scenic River that winds through dramatic bluffs, incredible wildlife diversity, gorgeous waterfalls, world-class fossil resources, and plenty of floating fun for the whole family."² The County Line Bridge crosses the Niobrara at mile marker 23.7 as established by the measurement of the river within the park.³

¹ Nebraska Department of Roads "County Line Bridge (Niobrara River Bridge)" HABS/HAER Documentation, Nebraska Historic Bridge Inventory, 1991.

² Niobrara National Scenic River webpage, <https://www.nps.gov/niob/index.htm>, accessed February 5, 2018.

³ "Map", Niobrara National Scenic River webpage, <https://www.nps.gov/niob/planyourvisit/maps.htm>, accessed February 5, 2018.

County Line Bridge
Name of Property

Cherry County, Nebraska
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1916

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Canton Bridge Company

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The County Line Bridge is a well preserved example of a Pratt through truss bridge type and retains all seven aspects of integrity. Following the flood of 1916, the Pratt through truss was widely used to replace damaged and destroyed bridges along the Niobrara River. It represents a once common bridge type for medium length river crossings in Cherry County, Nebraska.

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Pratt truss was designed by father-son team of Caleb Pratt (architect) and Thomas Pratt (engineer) and was patented in 1844. Similar in design to the Howe truss, the members of the Pratt truss worked with exact opposite functions; with vertical compression members and horizontal tension members. Two factors led to the Pratt truss not being as widely used as the Howe truss in the mid-1800s: the Pratt required more iron and the high cost of the material made utilizing the design too expensive and the Howe truss had a more rigid construction making it more suitable for wooden truss bridges. With the decrease of iron prices the use of the Pratt truss design rose, becoming the most widely used metal truss design during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴

Reports of increased snowmelt and raising rivers gave residents of Cherry County a warning of the destruction to the county's bridges that lie ahead. On February 17, the *Valentine Democrat* sounded the alarm that "Cherry county (sic) can hardly expect to escape the damage that will be incident to the thaw of the past few days." An ice gorge reported to be forty feet high was dynamited with two-hundred and fifty pounds of explosives; the paper predicted that following the detonation "an immense volume of waer(sic) will sweep everything in its path in the Niobrara valley," including over a dozen bridges.⁵ The following day a recap of the damage was offered in *The Searchlight*. Of the twenty-six Niobrara River bridges in the county, fifteen were totally destroyed – including the County Line Bridge – and seven were temporarily rendered impassible, leaving only four river crossings in use.⁶ Within a week work was already begun on the lesser damaged bridges to make them passable for travelers. The damage to the bridges was estimated at \$40,000, but "taken on a whole the county is fortunate in having any bridges left on the Niobrara considering the destructive power of the flood."⁷ An emergency resolution was passed by county commissioners and a special fund to pay for bridge repair and construction was established on February 29th.⁸ A major concern for the county was the recent spike in steel prices, which had nearly doubled. Given the nature of the situation, the commissioners were empowered to approve temporary river crossings during the construction of the permanent bridge replacement and, in some instances, select a more suitable location for a new bridge.⁹ The commissioners were later presented with the proposition to receive a loan from H.B. Skeen of "any amount of money up to \$10,000 at 7 per cent (sic) interest, said money to be used for the replacing bridges on the Niobrara river;" no mention of the board's action on the proposed loan was recorded.¹⁰

County commissioners spent early March visiting various sites of damaged and destroyed bridges, stopping at the County Line Bridge on March 3rd. Having approved the removal of material wrecked by the February floods on March 1st, the remnants of the County Line Bridge were removed, minus the extended piers of the original bridge, in preparation for later construction.¹¹ County commissioners and a representative of the Canton Bridge Company (Canton, OH) visited the County Line Bridge on March 20th to assess the appropriate bridge replacement at that location; later that month a new 120-foot Pratt through truss bridge was ordered.¹² The bridge repair was undertaken by the Canton Bridge Company under the existing bridge contract between the company and the county which was set to expire in October 1916. Newspapers – and likely county officials – were adamant that bridge replacements be completed prior to the end of the contract for fear of increasing costs on a subsequent contract.¹³

⁴ Martha Carver, *Tennessee's Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges* (Nashville, TN: Ambrose Printing Company, 2008), 262-3.

⁵ *Valentine Democrat*, Vol.31, No.2, February 17, 1916.

⁶ "Niobrara River Ron Rampage," *The Searchlight* (Valentine, NE), Vol.9, No.8, February 18, 1916.

⁷ *Valentine Democrat*, Vol.31, No.3, February 24, 1916.

⁸ Roads.; "Commissioners Proceedings," *The Searchlight* (Valentine, NE) Vol.9, No.15, April 7, 1916.

⁹ *Valentine Democrat*, Vol.31, No.4, March 2, 1916.

¹⁰ "Commissioners' Proceedings," *Valentine Democrat*, Vol.31, No.7, March 23, 1916.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; Roads.

¹² "Commissioners Proceedings," *The Searchlight* (Valentine, NE) Vol.9, No.15, April 7, 1916.; Roads.

¹³ "County Preparing to Build New Bridges," *The Searchlight* (Valentine, NE), Vol.9, No.12, March 17, 1916.

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Using steel rolled by the Cambria Steel Company (Johnstown, PA) and lumber provided by the Valentine Lumber Company, the County Line Bridge was erected no later than the end of September 1916.¹⁴ A completion date for the County Line Bridge was unable to be obtained; however, the final bridge replacement associated with the February 1916 flood was approved for the Madeen Bridge, south of Merriman, in early October.¹⁵

From the NDOT 1991 HABS/HAER documentation:

The pinned Pratt through truss was the bridge of choice for medium-scale river crossings in Nebraska during the early 1900s, as the Cherry County Commissioners discovered in 1916. Of the fourteen Cherry County bridges surveyed on the Niobrara River (five of which were erected in 1916), thirteen are medium-span Pratts. Due in part to this natural calamity, these Niobrara River bridges represent the best-preserved group of county trusses in the state. The County Line Bridge is historically significant for its association with the 1916 flood and for its representation of this transportation trend. It is technologically noteworthy as a well-documented example of a mainstay structural type.¹⁶

The bridge has changed little since its evaluation in 1991. The only alterations of note are likely replacement of the bridge decking and the covering of deteriorated timber decking planks of the driving deck with pieces of sheet metal. The southern abutment is experiencing deterioration of the concrete and has been reinforced with steel supports. Section F, page 2 of the National Register Multiple Property Submission (MPS) *Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942* states:

... most eligible bridges qualify under Criterion C as structures of engineering significance. This can encompass a broad range of considerations. For instance, a bridge can qualify under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a once common type, or as a unique example of an unusual type.¹⁷

The County Line Bridge retains a high level of all seven aspects of integrity and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: Engineering, at the local level of significance as a well-preserved example of a once common bridge type, a Pratt through truss.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carver, Martha. *Tennessee's Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges*, Nashville, TN: Ambrose Printing Company, 2008.

Nebraska Department of Roads, "County Line Bridge (Niobrara River Bridge)" HABS/HAER Documentation, Nebraska Historic Bridge Inventory, 1991.

Roise, Charlene K. "Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942" National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, May 18, 1992.

The Republican. Valentine, NE, October 6, 1916.

The Searchlight. Valentine, NE, February 18, 1916 – April 7, 1916.

Valentine Democrat. Valentine, NE, February 17, 1916 – March 23, 1916.

¹⁴ "Commissioners Proceedings," *The Searchlight* (Valentine, NE) Vol.9, No.15, April 7, 1916.; Roads.

¹⁵ "Will Submit Propositions," *The Republican* (Valentine, NE) Vol.29, No.50, October 6, 1916.

¹⁶ Roads.

¹⁷ Charlene K. Roise "Highway Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942" National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, May 18, 1992) F-2.

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Primary location of additional data:

- 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 # **CHER15**
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): CE00-020

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre USGS Quadrangle Muleshoe Creek

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | | | | |
|----|----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>42.8472262</u> | Longitude | <u>-100.2004033</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 140 feet by 16 feet, extending the length of the bridge plus 10 feet on each end and width of the bridge plus 1 foot on each side to allow for inclusion of the approaches and associated groundwork.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated structure includes the bridge's superstructure, substructure, floor system, any approach spans and the property on which they rest. These boundaries encompass, but do not exceed, all of the property that has been historically associated with this bridge.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Calease / National Register Coordinator
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date March 30, 2018
street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402-471-4775
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508
email David.Calease@nebraska.gov

County Line Bridge

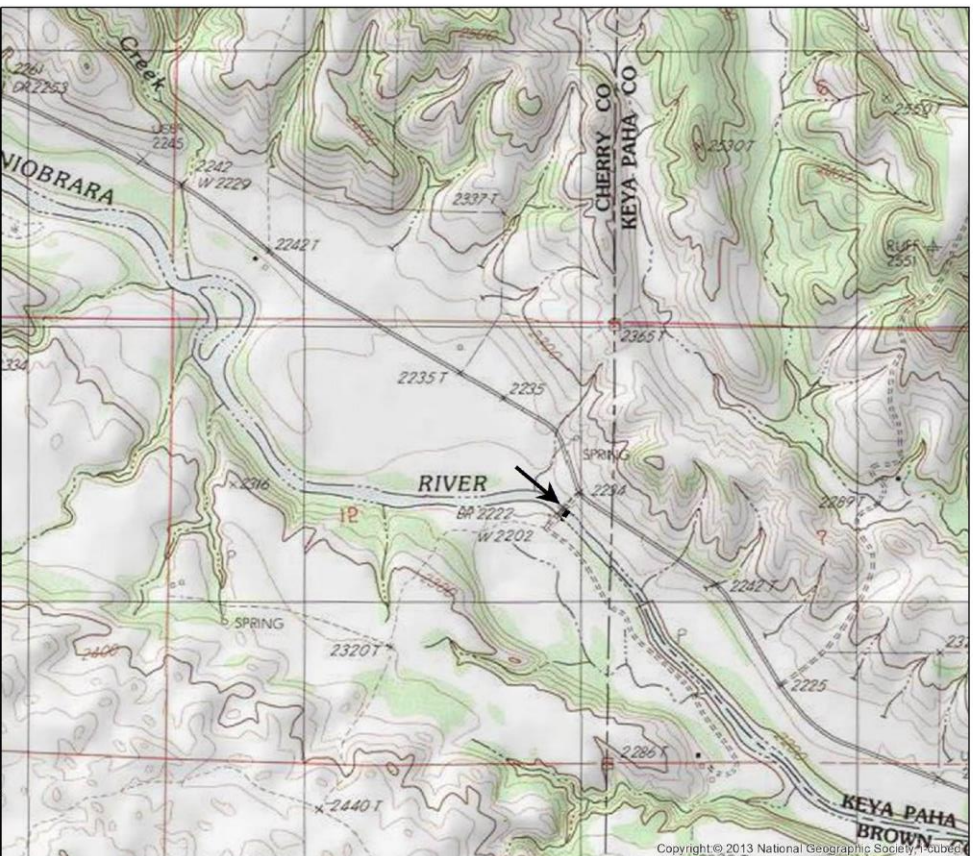
Name of Property

Cherry County, Nebraska
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)



County Line Bridge
Private road over Niobrara
River, Cherry Co.,
Nebraska

Legend

Proposed NRHP Boundary

1:16,000



0 550 1,100 2,200
Feet

0 180 360 720
Meters

USGS 7.5' Quad: Muleshoe Creek

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



County Line Bridge
Private road over Niobrara
River, Cherry Co.,
Nebraska

Legend
Proposed NRHP Boundary

County Line Bridge

Cherry County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch 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.

Photo Log

Name of Property County Line Bridge

City or Vicinity 17.5 miles east of Valentine County Cherry State Nebraska

Photographer Patrick Haynes / NeSHPO Date Photographed April 24, 2018

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

Image 1: Northern approach to the bridge; view southwest.

Image 2: Southern approach to the bridge; view northeast.

Image 3: Bridge as viewed from north bank; view west.

Image 4: Bridge as viewed from south bank with NPS identification marker; view northeast.

Image 5: Bridge decking as seen from northern abutment; view southwest.

Image 6: Bridge as viewed from below; view northeast.

Image 7: Detail of verticals and diagonals; view north.

Image 8: Detail of pinned connection.

Image 9: Cambria (Steel Company) stamp on vertical beam; view east.

Image 10: Carnegie (Steel Company) stamp on inclined end post; view south.

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.

A steel truss bridge with a sign on the railing. The sign is white with black and red text. The bridge is set in a rural landscape with tall grass and bare trees under a cloudy sky.

THIS BRIDGE IS PROPERTY OF:
THE BILL CONNOT RANCH LLC
NO CROSSING OR TRESPASSING
WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION!
(402) 217-1919







Walton National Scenic River
County Line Bridge
1916









CAMBERIA



CARNEGIE

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: 5/30/2018 Date of Pending List: 6/28/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/13/2018 Date of 45th Day: 7/16/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 7/13/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 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.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Niobrara National Scenic River
214 West Highway 20
Valentine, Nebraska 69201
(402) 376-1901 Voice
(402) 376-1949 Fax

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1.A. (NIOB)

May 17, 2018

David Calease
National Register Coordinator
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office
1500 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Mr. Calease:

Thank you for notifying us of the nomination of the County Line Bridge (CE00-020) for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and inviting our comments. As the administering agency for Niobrara National Scenic River, we have great interest in the resources within our boundary, and public user experiences on the river and its surrounds. We are mandated to manage for the Outstandingly Remarkable Values for which the Niobrara was designated a national scenic river. They include recreation, scenery, fish and wildlife, geology and paleontological resources. We additionally protect cultural resources within our boundary as per federal law.

As you know, the land on either end of the bridge is in private ownership, limiting our ability to influence the matter. While we do have an interest in and protect cultural resources, our overriding interest in this case is protecting and enhancing the scenic value of the river for sight-seers and recreationists. We believe that visitor experience would be enhanced by eventual bridge removal, and the area's return to a more natural appearance, however unlikely that might be. Whether placing the bridge on the National Register makes removal any less likely, I cannot say. However, we are sensitive to local interests, recognize that the bridge serves as a "way-point" for river floaters, and has a long-standing history in the area. Therefore, we do not object to its designation.

Sincerely,

Gordon Warrick, for

Steve Thede
Superintendent

May 25, 2018

Jim Gabbert
NPS-National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Re: County Line Bridge, Valentine (vicinity), Cherry County, NE

Dear Mr. Gabbert,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the County Line Bridge, located near Valentine, Cherry County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

- The signed first page of the County Line Bridge nomination;
- One archival disk with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the County Line Bridge to the National Register of Historic Places in PDF format; and
- One (1) disc with the photographs for the County Line Bridge nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David L. Calease'.

David L. Calease
National Register Coordinator
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: 402-471-4775
Fax: 402-471-3100
david.calease@nebraska.gov

Enclosures (2): 1 disk with Nomination
1 disk with National Register Photographs

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P: 800.833.6747
F: 402.471.3100
history.nebraska.gov