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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge
other names/site number State DOT Structure No. 17-496-252

2. Location

street & number Custer County FAS Road No. 656 not for publication
city, town Buffalo Gap vicinity
state South Dakota code SD county Custer code SD 033 zip code 57722

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 12/30/82
Signature of certifying official Date
South Dakota SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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] Entered in the National Register 2-8-88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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: Parker Through Truss

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A

roof N/A
other Steel
Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge

Constructed in 1932, the Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge is a three-span Parker through truss structure located 11.7 miles east and 0.8 mile north of Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. It crosses a wide, flat plain of the Cheyenne River about 20 miles downstream from Angostura Dam. Owned and maintained by the Custer County Highway Department, it is in good condition and carries a high vehicular traffic load between Custer County and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation a few miles to the east. The bridge is 694 feet long counting two reinforced concrete approach spans. It is 18 feet wide. Each truss span is 150 feet long. The three truss spans rest on four poured concrete piers, and the road bed is constructed of poured concrete. The bridge rises approximately 25 feet above the floor of the non-navigable Cheyenne River.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Period of Significance

1932-1937

Significant Dates

1932

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # Inventory only (Black Hills Mining and Engineering Sites, Card No. 104)

Specify repository: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis Anderson, Superintendent (w/ technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO staff)

organization Custer County Highway Department date October 30, 1987

street & number RR 1, Box 101X telephone 605-673-4240/ Rau: 605-677-5314

city or town Custer state South Dakota zip code 57730

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Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, the Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge is significant in the area of transportation for its association with development of the community surrounding Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. It is one of only four extant pre-1941 bridges crossing the Cheyenne River between the South Dakota-Wyoming border and the Missouri River. Upon its construction in 1932, the bridge offered the first and only convenient river crossing for people traveling between Custer County and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Under the South Dakota Historical Preservation Plan the property relates to the historic context labeled: V. Depression and Rebuilding, G. New Transportation Facilities and the Impact of the Automobile.

Custer County was organized in 1877, after ratification of the Black Hills Cession that permitted non-Indian settlement in the gold fields of that area. Buffalo Gap, named for the nearby mountain pass, was founded at about this same time, serving as a stage stop along the trail from Sidney, Nebraska, to Deadwood, Dakota Territory. In 1885, the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad, a subsidiary of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, completed its line into Buffalo Gap. For many years thereafter, the community was a prominent shipping center. During its 19th-Century heyday, Buffalo Gap was locally famous as a rowdy camp of some 2,000 residents, most of whom were engaged in businesses that served the mines and cattle ranches of the area. With the closing of many of the mines after World War I, the population of Buffalo Gap shrunk to less than 200 people, where it has remained ever since.

The advent of the automobile provided greater convenience to travelers, and it also required different facilities such as better river crossings. Under the Federal Highway Act of 1916, the United States Government began to finance an interstate highway program, but it did little to improve local transportation. In South Dakota, some state-financed highway and bridge construction began to take shape by the mid-twenties; however, a great deal was still left up to local government and private resources. With both Black Hills tourism and local automobile travel on the rise, in the early 1930's, the Custer County Commission agreed to cooperate with the State Department of Transportation in the construction of the Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge.

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The design chosen was a three-span steel Parker truss with two spans of poured concrete for approaches, popular throughout South Dakota. At the dedication ceremony, on October 17, 1932, bureaucrats and politicians praised the new structure for its convenience as well as its forecasted role in the economic growth of the region. They pointed particular attention to prospects of direct access to and from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. State Poet Laureate and Custer County resident Badger Clark recited a work he composed in honor of the bridge. In his typical earthy style, Clark called the Cheyenne River an "outlaw" that had been marauding and generally impeding travel for many years. The new bridge, he said, would stop this "sinfulness" for now the river was "hogtied".

Many of those aspirations did not materialize as population on both sides of the river continued to dwindle. Nevertheless, the Buffalo Gap Bridge remains in place, witnessing heavy daily use. Since most of the historic bridges along the Cheyenne River have been replaced over the years, it is one of the few remaining reminders of the dreams of those vintage automobilists in western South Dakota. In the mid-1970's, the National Park Service Historic American Engineering Record included the bridge in an inventory of historic mining and engineering sites in the Black Hills area. The custodian of the bridge, the Custer County Highway Department, seeks listing as a step in its preservation.

The period of significance of the property extends from its construction in 1932 to 1937, the established cut-off date for the National Register.

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Section number 9 Page 1 Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge

Condit, Carl W. American Building: Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

"Four Hundred Defy Salty Day to See the River Hog-Tied: Crowd Praises Structure and Blessings it Means to the People." Custer County Chronicle. Custer, South Dakota. October 20, 1932.

South Dakota State Department of Transportation. "Maintenance Inspection Status Report", Custer County. p. 46.

_____. "Structure Inventory and Appraisal Report for Custer County, South Dakota". Bridge No. 17-496-252.

_____. "Structure Inspection Report". Structure No. 17-496-252.

Sundstrom, Jessie Y., ed. Custer County History to 1976. Custer, SD: Custer County Historical Society, 1977. Passim.

"You're Hog-Tied, Old Cheyenne". in Mrs. Carl H. (Jessie Y.) Sundstrom, comp.. Boots and Bylines: Poems by Badger Clark, Comments by Camille Yuill. Custer, SD: Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc., 1978. not paginated.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Buffalo Gap Cheyenne River Bridge

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY

Less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES

Since the appropriate U. S. G. S. quad map does not have UTM marks for calculating the UTM reference of the property, that reference has been calculated in Longitude and Latitude.

Reference: 103° 4' 5" longitude/ 43° 30' 7" latitude.

Fairburn SE quad, scale= 1:24,000.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes only the bridge, which measures 694 feet by 18 feet, and its piers and abutments. It is located in the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 6 South, Range 9 East (Black Hills Prime Meridian), in Custer County, South Dakota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property is bounded so as to exclude the Cheyenne River, the county road on either side of the approach spans of the bridge, and any private land along the river.