E INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-306 (Oct. 1972)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The remaining structures of Wolfe Ranch are located near the bank of Salt Wash, in a desolate valley flanked by the upturned strata of the Salt Valley Anticline. Because rainfall is scanty (less than ten inches per year), the wash is often dry, but flash floods commonly occur after summer cloudbursts. Sagebrush, greasewood, and saltbush dominate the uplands; tamarisk and various grasses and sedges line the wash. The valley is floored by the green shale of the Morrison Formation. The Morrison, with its high concentrations of selenium and salts, produces a heavy soil, poorly suited for agricultural purposes. A strong flowing, freshwater spring is located in a narrow side canyon about three quarters of a mile from the structures.

The Wolfe Ranch includes a small cabin (HS 1), a dugout cellar (HS 2), and a corral (HS 3). The walls and foundations of the cabin and cellar are of unhewn, knotched cottonwood and juniper logs. The roofs are also of log, with shale and juniper bark on top and in the cracks. The one room cabin is 15' X 17', with one doorway and one window. There is no ceiling, and in the middle of the rough plank floor, a large juniper post supports the roof. The dugout cellar is 12' X 12', with one doorway and no floor. The corral is approximately 50' X 75', with juniper posts and rails.

In November and December of 1967, emergency stabilization was carried out. Plastic and canvas material was incorporated into the roofs of the cabin and the cellar to prevent leakage. Additional shale and juniper bark was placed on the roofs and in wall crevices. Excess dirt was removed from the inside of the dugout cellar. All corral posts were removed and reset, rotten posts were replaced with new posts from a similar corral on BLM land.

The cabin and cellar were built in 1907 by John Wesley Wolfe, his son Fred, and his son-in-law, Ed Stanley. Wolfe sold the ranch in 1910 to Tommy Larson. Marvin Turnbow bought the ranch in 1914 and the cabin became locally known as Turnbow Cabin. In 1938 the ranch became a part of Arches National Monument. In 1971 the site was officially dedicated as Wolfe Ranch Environmental Study Area.

The appearance of the structures has changed very little since 1907. Due to flooding, Wolfe's dam, irrigation ditches, and garden have been almost totally lost.

Preservation is the recommended level of treatment. Significance is <u>local</u>, <u>3rd order</u>.

Pre-Columbian 15th Century	☐ 16th Century	18th Century 19th Century	X 20th Century
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◯ Agriculture	Invention	Science	
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Because of hostile Indians and rugged terrain, permanent settlement was slow to come to southeast Utah. In 1877, Moab, on the Colorado River at the foot of the LaSal Mountains was established. By 1883, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was completed and Indian hostilities had become less frequent.

In 1888, John Wesley Wolfe, a disabled Civil War veteran from Ohio and his son, Fred, arrived in the area and either bought or built a cabin on the banks of Salt Wash, in an isolated valley about halfway between Moab and the railroad at Thompson Springs. They dammed the wash and irrigated a garden with the impounded water. Drinking water came from a spring about three quarters of a mile away. They grazed cattle under the Bar DX brand. In 1906 Wolfe's daughter, son-in-law, and their two small children arrived, and a new cabin and a dugout cellar were built for them in the spring of The logs for the structures came from banks of the Colorado, six miles away. The newcomers stayed for less than two years and then moved In 1910 Wolfe sold the ranch and he and Fred moved backegest. Shortly thereafter the original cabin was destroyed in a flash flood; the "new" cabin and dugout cellar were left unharmed.

Historically, the activities of man on the Colorado Plateau have been a function of his ability to exploit and control its meager water resources. Wolfe's ranching operation on Salt Wash is an excellent example of early subsistance farming and grazing in a marginal environment.

The crudeness of the remaining structures reflects the harshness of the environment, not a lack of skill in construction. Because building materials were so scarce, no two logs used were of the same size or shape. By expertly fitting the logs together, these men created durable, unique structures, which are all that remains of one of the earliest ranches in Southeast Utah.

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Form No. 10-300a (Nov. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY SEP 9 1975 RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED MOV 2 0 1005

Wolfe Ranch Historical District

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Summary Statement of Significance

The Wolfe Ranch Historical District is significant as an example of how man learned despite the harshness of the environment to exploit and control this country in southeast Utah; man's survival in this country was constantly threatened by hostile Indians, the rugged terrain, and the absence of an adequate water supply. The structures the settlers like John Wesley Wolfe erected are a testimonial to their ingenuity. Moreover, because of the scarcity of building materials, which required a great measure of implementation to "make do" with what they had, the structures erected while durable were unique. They reflected little uniformity in construction as no two logs were of the same size or shape. Such structures as still stand are all that remains of the earliest ranches in this country.