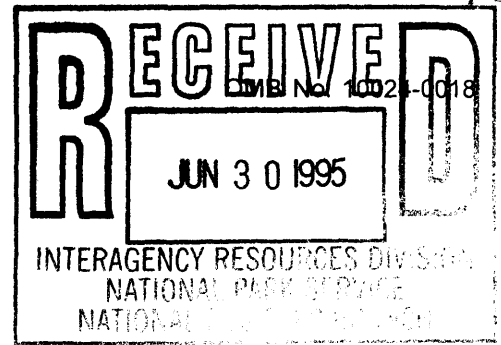


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 Pueblo City Park Zoo  
other names/site number Pueblo Zoo; Pueblo Zoological Gardens; 5PE587

### 2. Location

street & number 3455 Nuckolls Avenue [N/A] not for publication  
city or town Pueblo [N/A] vicinity  
state Colorado code CO county Pueblo code 101 zip code 81005

### 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 [ ].)

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer June 27, 1995  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or 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  
See continuation sheet [ ].

for  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date 7/28/95  
Entered in the National Register

Pueblo City Park Zoo  
**Name of Property**

Pueblo, CO  
**County/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 count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
6	0	structures
0	1	objects
8	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Museum  
Park  
Outdoor recreation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Museum  
Park  
Outdoor recreation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation. See continuation sheet  
walls  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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Pueblo County, CO

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Section 7: Description--Materials

**Bear Pits**

Foundation: EARTH  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone, Limestone  
Roof: N/A  
Other: METAL/Steel

**Mountain (Monkey Mountain)**

Foundation: EARTH  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone  
Roof: N/A  
Other: METAL/Steel

**Bird House**

Foundation: EARTH  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone  
Roof: METAL  
Other: GLASS

**Light Poles (2)**

Foundation: STONE/Sandstone  
Walls: N/A  
Roof: N/A  
Other: METAL/Cast Iron, Steel,  
GLASS

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Wall

Foundation: N/A  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone  
Roof: N/A  
Other: N/A

Monkey Moat

Foundation: EARTH  
STONE/Sandstone  
CONCRETE  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone  
Roof: N/A  
Other: WOOD  
GLASS  
METAL/Wrought Iron  
WOOD/Shingle

Animal House

Foundation: CONCRETE  
Walls: STONE/Sandstone  
Roof: SYNTHETIC/Shingle  
WOOD/ Shingle  
Other: GLASS

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Pueblo City Park Zoo  
Pueblo County, CO

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SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION

**Summary**

The Pueblo Zoo is located at 3455 Nuckolls Avenue in the southwest corner of the Pueblo City Park, at the cross streets of Goodnight Avenue and Pueblo Boulevard. The Pueblo Zoo is today, as it has been since its inception, a living museum and recreational facility serving the city of Pueblo and all of southern Colorado. It occupies approximately 30 acres in southwest corner of City Park and is divided from the Park with an eight foot high chain link fence topped with barbed wire. The Zoo complex is comprised of numerous outdoor animal pens, small cages, and five major buildings. The construction of the Pueblo Zoo occurred in several stages with the architecture of the entire complex representing various styles from the twentieth century. The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district occupies 2.5 acres in the northeast section of the Zoo and includes two buildings and six structures built between 1933 and 1940 by federal government work relief programs.

**Detailed Description**

The district contains two buildings and six structures which date from 1933 to 1940 and one non-contributing object installed in 1987. The buildings include the Animal House, located in the farthest western edge of the district, and the Tropical Bird House (Aviary or Herpetarium)<sup>1</sup>, located in the southeast part of the district. The structures include: Monkey Moat (Monkey Island), an island surrounded by water that currently houses lemurs, located directly east of the Animal House and sharing its eastern wall; the Mountain (Monkey Mountain), a miniature mountain, located east of Monkey Moat; the Bear Pits (4) located east of the mountain and sharing a sandstone wall; two light post towers sitting between the Bear Pits and the Tropical Bird House where a road once came through the Zoo (the light post towers are approximately 80 feet from one another); and, a large sandstone wall extending north and south of the Bear Pits where

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<sup>1</sup> Modern and common names of buildings and structure of the Pueblo City park Zoo historic district are denoted by parentheses.

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it creates the eastern boundary for the district. The one non-contributing structure in the district is a small outdoor graphic sculpture located west of the Tropical Bird House. All buildings and structures are contained within the 2.5 acre district (refer to sketch map). They are in relatively close proximity with a matter of feet between each building/structure or, in some cases, they share common walls. The spaces between the buildings and structures are filled with modern asphalt walkways, trees, shrubs, and grass. The continuity of building materials and architectural style of the historical structures make the district a distinct part of the Pueblo Zoo.

The buildings and structures of the historic district represent a regional architectural style typical of the WPA period. All are vernacular in style and incorporate locally quarried red cilium sandstone from the mountains 25 miles west of Pueblo. Although WPA engineers did not seek uniformity when constructing the five structures, city officials demanded the building materials and the general style of the architecture be native to the region. To achieve this "rustic"<sup>2</sup> and regional look, workers left the sandstone in an uncut, natural state creating dramatic stone walls with no specific design or pattern. The buildings and structures also incorporate a style typical of many zoos early in the twentieth century. The use of moats and artificial mountains became popular in zoos around the world after Carl Hagenback of Germany introduced a naturalistic approach to zoo design at the turn of the century. The Mountain and the moat system around the island and entire zoo is representative of Hagenback's theories.<sup>3</sup>

The original Pueblo City Park Zoo was connected to the park without any boundaries or obstructions, thus standing open and accessible to the public 24 hours a day. Two light post adjacent to the bear pits and flood lights in Monkey Moat allowed visitors to view outdoor exhibits even during the evening hours. There was also a paved road which allowed motorists to enter the Zoo area between the Tropical Bird House and

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<sup>2</sup> "Rock Used in Building Fine Pueblo Structure", W. P. A. Worker, no. 7, 1 (December 1936) : 11.

<sup>3</sup> David Hancocks, *Animals and Architecture: The Story of Building for Animals* (New York: Beekman, 1971), 128-9; R. L. Blakely, "Zoo", *Built in the U.S.A.: American Buildings from Airports to Zoos* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1985), 174.

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the Bear Pits to park their cars. <sup>4</sup> The plan was to make the entire park accessible via automobile so that people could enjoy the park and Zoo from their cars.

Today, the Zoo is a separate entity from City Park, surrounded by chain linked fences and is normally closed during the evening and night hours. Many structures have been added to the Zoo in the past fifty years between the perimeter of the district and the large pens which are still surrounded by a moat built in the 1930s. The roadway and parking area which originally divided the Tropical Bird House and Bear Pits has long since been replaced with asphalt walkways, grass, and trees. The historic district, however, remains intact looking much the way it did fifty years ago despite its separation from Pueblo City Park.

### Contributing Structures

The **Mountain**, just west of the Bear Pits, was constructed, in part, with the earth excavated from the Bear Pits. PWA started constructing the miniature mountain in 1933. The PWA landscaped the Mountain, but it was WPA workers who completed it in 1936 by adding excavated earth from the pits, the massive stones of red cilium sandstone to create a dramatic summit, and stone walls supporting the rising earth of the mountain. Workers also created trails, caves, and river beds that lead to the summit. At the top of the Mountain, workers made a stone reservoir to provide a water shed for the small rivers and water falls that run down the north face of the Mountain. The west side of the massive summit still has an inlayed stone reading "PROJECT HI-WAY I123 BUILT 1936". The Mountain was originally intended to house deer which could climb up the mountain to seek shelter in two caves at its base.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, there was a beaver pond on the western side of the Mountain which received water from the Mountain's water system. The State Game Department stocked the pond with beaver for many years. In the 1950s, the Pueblo Parks Department restored the Mountain which was suffering from erosion. The Parks

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<sup>4</sup> The invention of the automobile at the turn of the century and its wide spread use by the 1930s caused many cities to plan areas with easy access to cars.

<sup>5</sup> Although there is evidence that the mountain was intended to house deer there is no evidence that deer were actually housed on the mountain. Photographic evidence shows that people were probably climbing the mountain as early as the 1940s and definitely in the 1950s.

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Department replenished dirt and added sandstone steps and earth walkways for human traffic. The enhanced mountain was intended to be a better hiking and climbing attraction. The beaver pond was eventually filled with dirt. Today, the Mountain is closed to Zoo visitors because of serious and dangerous deterioration. Despite deterioration and the addition of steps and walkways, the Mountain maintains much of its original integrity.

The **Bear Pits** are four long, below ground level stone pits together measuring sixty by one-hundred-sixty feet (each measuring 15 x 40 feet). Originally constructed to house bears and other mammals, the construction of these pits was done by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) starting in 1935. The WPA dug the massive hole by hand and completed them in 1936 with the native red cilium sandstone characteristic of the other buildings and structures in the district. The incorporation of both smaller sandstone rocks and, in some cases, massive stones create dramatic rock walls. Of particular interest are the rock "dens" created in each pit out of these huge stones. The wall on the north side of the pits rises above ground and has metal railing above the wall for the protection of people peering down into the pits to view animals. Above the viewing wall between the farthest west pit and the second pit is a bronze plaque mounted in stone commemorating the WPA and those individuals involved in the work at the Pueblo City Park Zoo. The wall continues beyond the end of the east pit where it has an alcove which housed a drinking fountain. The bottom of each pit is earth with either a concrete moat (in the two western pits) or smaller watering holes (in the two eastern pits) and a rock "den" with a steel cage door for holding animals during cleaning. Each pit has one steel cage door on its south side that leads to a below ground level walkway. The walkway was constructed with a lighter-colored limestone making a distinct contrast with the other pit walls. This walkway is accessible to the ground level by a stairway at its center. A ground level stone wall behind the Bear Pits connects them to the Mountain. Today, the Bear Pits have changed very little. However, under modern standards, the Bear Pits are considered unacceptable for animals. Because of many years of neglect, the landscape has become overgrown with vegetation, the walls may be structurally unsound, and the drinking fountain no longer functions.



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East of the Bear Pits, is an eight to twelve foot stone wall which runs from the front of the Pits southward for 124 feet. The stone wall originally marked the entrance to the Zoo. The wall system is contiguous and is adjacent to the wall south of the Bear Pits and Mountain. Today, this wall functions as the eastern boundary of the Zoo and the historic district, but is no longer the entrance to the Zoo. It is basically unchanged except for the addition of posts and barbed wire its top of the wall. Deterioration of the wall is minimal, but some cracks do exist.

The Tropical Bird House (Aviary or Herpetarium) stands directly north of the Bear Pits on the northeastern edge of the district. The Bird House was the first building to built at the Pueblo Zoo by the WPA. Constructed of the characteristic red cilium sandstone, it was completed in 1936. It is a rectangular, one-story building originally constructed with ten windows on the south elevation and one door and window on the west elevation and one window on the east elevation. The original windows were side by side wood casement windows with both sides operable. Each casement window had twelve divided lights with true muntin bars. Although from a distance the roof appears to be flat, in realty the ceiling is slightly vaulted and constructed of open wood bow-string trusses most likely built on site by WPA workers. The interior of the building shows exposed stone walls and stone columns which serve as part of its structural system. An underground furnace room is located beneath the center of the building. The original intent for the building was to house tropical and native birds, thus the north side has an earth-floored extension with fifteen sandstone (arcade style) arches meant to be flight cages for the numerous birds housed inside. The north side roof and arches were covered in metal mesh creating the ten flight cages. Each flight cage had a small door on the south wall leading to the interior of the Bird House. Over time, the Bird House underwent many changes. At one time between the 1960s and 1980s, the building housed City Park's concession stand and rest rooms. The original windows were boarded up, mesh was removed from the back flight cages, double doors were added to the south elevation, and equipment necessary to operate a concession stand was added to the interior. In 1986, the Bird House underwent restoration. The windows were replaced on the south facade of the building with wood clad, true divided light, fixed windows in the same configuration as the original. The interior of the building was also restored leaving stone walls, trusses and columns exposed. The double doors at the center of the south elevation were replaced with oak

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Pueblo County, CO

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parceled doors with a single light. The windows on the west and east elevations were also replaced and the door on the west elevation remains. The north facade was not restored and remains unchanged since the 1960s with empty flight cages and no mesh covering those cages. Today, the building serves as the Zoo's Herpetarium and interior free standing exhibits have been added, appropriate to that theme, without destroying the integrity of the building.

The two **light post towers** that stand between the Bear Pits and the Bird House appear to have been constructed by the WPA in approximately 1937.<sup>6</sup> The light posts were originally placed along a roadway that led into the Zoo and were meant to light the Zoo during the evening hours. The light posts stand almost fifteen feet high and have a four sided base with each side measuring five feet and narrowing towards the top of the tower. Black wrought iron and glass lamps top each tower with decorative copper painted, wrought iron grill work on the north and south faces. The elaborate grill work held a light fixture on each side. The light post towers have been unaltered with the exception of new wiring. They are no longer used and the north facing light fixtures are missing on each tower.

**Monkey Moat** (Monkey Island) lies west of the Mountain and was completed by WPA workers in 1939. Plans to construct the moat are found as early as 1937, however construction did not begin until 1938. The Moat was completed in 1939 prior to the construction of the Animal House. Monkey Moat is an earth and red cilium sandstone island surrounded by a stone moat and two foot stone wall. The Monkey Moat was constructed to house a variety of monkeys. Workers landscaped the island and built a miniature stone and wood light house and a miniature wooden water wheel. A wood "plank" bridge leads over the moat to a side door in the Animal House. Beneath the water wheel lies a "shipwrecked" boat made of concrete and wood. The boat is known as the "Ada Mae", named after City Commissioner and WPA organizer Ray H. Talbot's daughter. The Moat also had numerous flood lights underwater and a light in the lighthouse to illuminate the exhibit at night. Monkey Moat continues to be the home of primates and has seen few changes over the years. The original stone moat was covered with concrete at an undetermined date and a

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<sup>6</sup> They are mentioned in an article in the *American City*, October, 1937.

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wood walkway on the island was added as an enrichment feature for the animals. The Moat and its features have suffered deterioration over the years. The Moat is antiquated and cracked, and the underwater floodlights are no longer functional. The wood stairs and windows of the lighthouse are deteriorating and in need of replacement. The wood on the water wheel was replaced in the 1970s, but has since deteriorated as well. The "Ada Mae" fared the worst with severe deterioration causing the removal of the wood cabin and mast in recent years and the remaining body of the boat made of concrete, with some wood in the hull, is weathered and cracked with peeling paint.

Workers completed the Animal House in 1940 marking the end of WPA construction in the Pueblo City Park Zoo complex. Plans were made to construct the Animal House in 1936 with construction beginning in early 1939. The Animal House shares its eastern wall with Monkey Moat and marks the western boundary of the district. The Animal House is a one-story, red cilium sandstone building with two large wings, a central foyer, and hexagonal flat roofed-cupola rising above the central foyer with clear story lighting via lights in each pen of the pentagonal sides. The roof is gabled originally covered in shake shingles. The entire building has 28 windows and six doors including one front door, a door on each wing, a door on each side and one rear door. The windows were divided light, wood casement windows. The larger windows had twelve divided lights with true muntin bars and the smaller had eight divided lights. The doors were divided light doors with 18 panes. The Animal House was designed to house animals during the winter months. It had 17 cages that were in three sizes--3' x 4', 3' x 5', and 3' x 6'. The cages were enclosed with steel bars with seven cages in each wing and three along the south foyer wall. Important features of the Animal House are the sculptures on the skylight and the relief sculptures in the cages. This work was done by WPA artists, hired after a group of unemployed men were spotted making sand sculptures along the Arkansas River in Pueblo. Sculptures of a bear, lion, and ape stand atop the cupola of the Animal House, a small monkey above the doorway to Monkey Moat and each cage has extensive relief sculptures of natural scenes and vegetation. Additionally, a fountain occupied the area beneath the cupola in the foyer of the building and was made of concrete and filled with concrete sculpted alligators made by the WPA sculptors. The building originally was heated with a coal furnace in an underground furnace room. Today, the exterior of the

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Animal House remains much as it was fifty years ago with exception of two added steel cages on the south facade of the building. These cages were added in 1971 when the City created larger feline cages in the interior of the building. The addition of three larger cages in the foyer of the building resulted in the elimination of the fountain and of smaller cages in the foyer. A kitchen was also added replacing a foyer cage in the eastern wing. At this same time, glass facades replaced the steel bars of the remaining cages and the original front and side doors were replaced with glass doors. Other alterations to the building came in 1981 with a new asphalt shingle roof, a new boiler system, and the replacement of the north and south elevation windows with fixed aluminum, single light windows.

### Noncontributing Object

The one non-contributing structure within the boundaries of the Pueblo Zoo Historic District is a small graphic sculpture. The sculpture was built in 1987 and consists of a 4' 8" x 15' standing wooden graphic and a 7'x 15' sand pit.

The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district is unique within the zoo complex because of the continuity of regional WPA construction. Many of the structures and buildings in the Pueblo Zoo were built after 1950 and reflect the style and appearance of the individual time periods in which they were built. The two buildings and six structures of the district, however reflect the WPA era in Pueblo, Colorado, with unique rustic architectural style and red cilium sand stone walls. The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district is contained within a small area of the Zoo giving it a distinct appearance within the entire zoo complex.

Pueblo City Park Zoo  
**Name of Property**

Pueblo, CO  
**County/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 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 Bibliographic 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

# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Art

Politics/Government

### Periods of Significance

1933 - 1940

### Significant Dates

1933

1935

1936

1939

1940

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Elliott, S.F.

Burgiss, Robert

Owen, Terry

Bayless, Ben

### Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

West. Res. Rm. McClelland Library

West. Hist. Dept., Denver Pub. Lib.

Pueblo Hist. Soc. Library

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**Section 8: Narrative Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

The two buildings and six structures of the Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district are significant under criterion A (in the areas of social history, politics and government, and entertainment and recreation history) and under criterion C (in the areas of architecture, art, and landscape architecture). All of the resources being considered were constructed during the work relief projects between 1933 and 1940.

**Historical Context**

The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district is significant under criterion A in the areas of social history, politics and government, and entertainment and recreation history. The major historical themes affecting the development of the Pueblo City Park Zoo are:

- Scientific Age and Parks and Recreation Movement
- Great Depression
- Public Works Administration and Civil Works Administration
- Works Progress Administration

**Parks and Recreation Movement and Scientific Age**

Early in the twentieth century, the United States experienced two movements--the parks and recreation movement and the scientific age--which helped spread zoos and parks across the country. In the late nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux's building of New York City's Central Park helped to spur a municipal park movement which spread across the country. Following their lead, designers built huge parkways in cities and towns hoping to create open spaces to "remove" people from urban pressures. By the turn of the century, recreation became an important factor in many parks. Municipal governments restructured parks to include ball fields, play grounds, museums, and zoos. Many local governments established Parks and Recreation Commissions to oversee growing parks systems in most cities. Science and technology, too, were making rapid strides at this time setting the stage for the

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scientific age. Many cities found it a perfect opportunity to add zoos to their growing list of cultural institutions. Increased interest in taxonomy (the scientific classification of plants and animals) helped shape zoos into institutions housing a great variety of animals usually displayed in closely related groups. The scientific age combined with the expanding parks and recreation movement helped to spread zoos across the country.

Pueblo felt the effects of both movements with city fathers eager to make their parks some of the best in the state. The influence of the scientific age was evident in Pueblo through the tradition of keeping animals in its parks. As early as 1890, three local parks housed a variety of animals for public display. Pueblo City Park was the home to several buffalo, deer, and elk which were held in pens. Pueblo's Mitchell and Mineral Palace parks also housed animals. Mineral Palace Park had the largest "zoo" at the time with monkeys, coyotes, bear porcupines, swans, ducks, and other fowl. Throughout the 1920s, the City Park Zoo consisted of several large pens that housed hoofed animals and some small iron cages for monkeys, small mammals, and lions. The notion of developing one zoo in Pueblo, however, was sparked when Carl Hagenback, a German zoo pioneer, visited the city in November, 1905, hoping to develop a zoo in the Rocky Mountain area. Although Hagenback never developed a zoo in Pueblo, his visit helped to encourage city officials to consolidate the park "zoos". In 1920, City Commissioner Lovern proposed the consolidation of the city's three "park zoos" to thirty acres in City Park which had been allocated for a zoological garden in the early 1900s. By 1924, most of the city's animals had been moved to City Park and were housed in large pens and cages. However, it was not until the Great Depression and resulting federal work relief programs that the Pueblo City Park Zoo saw significant changes and improvements.

### The Great Depression

The stock market crash of October 24, 1929, marked the beginning of the Great Depression in the United States. Repercussions of the crash were felt throughout the country; and, by 1932, 12 million people were unemployed. Like the rest of the nation, Colorado was hit hard by the Depression. Agriculture and industry declined steadily, leaving over 60,000 wage earners unemployed in the state by 1932 and over

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75,000 by 1933. The federal government advised Colorado officials first to provide employment for the unemployed and then to provide relief for the impoverished. The New Deal administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised to allocate federal funds to the state under the condition that the state and local municipalities provided matching funds.

Pueblo, too, felt the effects of the Depression. Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) one of the state's largest producers, was forced into receivership in 1933, laying off a large portion of its work force. In that year, Pueblo city commissioners began to investigate possible work relief projects for the city's unemployed. The first work relief programs in Pueblo were Civilian Conservation Camps and Public Works Administration projects.

#### **Public Works Administration and the Civil Works Administration**

As the demand for jobs, rather than purely relief money grew, the federal government sought to create programs to meet this need. In 1933, the New Deal government established the Public Works Administration (PWA) followed by the Civil Works Administration (CWA) later that year. The PWA was meant to encourage and aid in the erection of public buildings and provide work for the heavy construction industry. Projects were usually completed by private contractors and did not employ relief workers. States and municipalities were responsible for a portion of the costs of the program while the federal government offered to pay a small amount. The federal government allocated \$17 million a day to PWA projects hoping to keep thousands of construction workers employed throughout the country. The CWA was a short lived New Deal Agency created in late in 1933. The goal of the CWA was to provide work relief for the winter of 1933-1934 while stimulating the economy. The CWA lasted until March of 1934 when it was canceled as the federal government had promised.

The Depression and resulting relief programs offered new possibilities for the Pueblo City Park Zoo. In 1933, the first project at the Zoo was initiated under the PWA. With the support of former Parks Commissioner and City Commissioner Ray H. Talbot, the Pueblo City Park Zoo received PWA funding to landscape a miniature mountain in the parks deer pen. The PWA never finished the project and it was later completed by



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WPA workers. In the winter of 1934, CWA workers constructed large steel cages east of what was to become the Bear Pits. These cages housed various mammals and birds for many years. The cages were removed and the area where they once stood is no longer part of the Pueblo Zoo.

### Works Progress Administration

In 1935, realizing the overwhelming need for relief work, the federal government created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to provide jobs to the unemployed. Financial responsibility was shared among the federal government, states, and local municipalities. The WPA existed from 1935 to 1943 and employed over 8.5 million individuals on more than 1.4 million projects throughout the country. The federal government spent \$11 billion on WPA projects with \$111 million in Colorado alone.<sup>1</sup> The WPA helped to speed the improvement of municipal infrastructures across the country while employing a vast number of people.

Pueblo received \$10 million in federal funds between July 1, 1935 and September 30, 1939.<sup>2</sup> Projects included construction at Pueblo Junior College, Mineral Palace Park, City Park Golf Course, City Park Zoo, Colorado State Hospital, Colorado State Fairgrounds as well as repairs and construction of miles of sewers, sidewalks, streets, and alleys.

Between 1935 and 1940, four major projects were completed in the Pueblo City Park Zoo. WPA workers constructed all eight red cilium sandstone buildings and structures in the zoo complex. These construction projects began in 1935 with federal approval of the Bird House on August 29 at a cost of \$23,988. The Bird House was followed by approval of the Bear Pits and the Mountain left unfinished by the PWA. All three new structures as well as two light posts were ready for visitors by summer, 1936. A report in *WPA Worker* said the Pueblo City Park Zoo "was visited by thousands of visitors" in that summer.<sup>3</sup> Construction on Monkey Moat began in 1938 and was

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<sup>1</sup> T. H. Watkins, *The Great Depression: America in the 1930s* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), 249; Leroy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People* volume 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1948), 557.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen J. Leonard, *Trials and Triumphs: A Colorado Portrait of the Great Depression* (Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1993), 97.

<sup>3</sup> "Unique Structures in Pueblo Park", *WPA Worker* 1 (October, 1936): 22.

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completed in 1939. Construction on the Animal House began in 1939 and was completed in 1940. Construction of the Animal House marked the end of the WPA period in the Pueblo City Park Zoo.

From 1936 to 1942, WPA roles in Pueblo decreased dramatically. The first cuts came in 1936 when 3,000 WPA workers in the county were laid off. Additionally, with growing tensions in Europe and the subsequent build up of American defenses, production at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation (CF&I) increased. By 1937, many workers were rehired at CF&I, and by 1939, the steel mill was producing at full capacity. Early in 1943, by executive order of President Roosevelt, the WPA ceased to operate across the country.

The PWA, CWA, and WPA had a significant impact on Pueblo. In 1942, City Commissioner Ray H. Talbot said of the projects in Pueblo:

I sometimes wonder just what Pueblo would have done if it had not been for the generosity of the federal government. Our parks are rated as some of the finest in the nation. We have miles of curbs and gutters and blocks of sidewalks have been constructed. Practically all streets and alleys have been graded and graveled. We have new buildings for civic activities; the Colorado State Fair has been brought from nothing to a million dollar institution.<sup>4</sup>

### Architectural Context

The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district is eligible under criterion C, for architecture, landscape architecture, and art. All of the buildings and structures in the district were constructed between 1933 and 1940 with the major stone work and construction completed by the WPA between 1935 and 1940. WPA workers used native red cilium sandstone quarried 25 miles west of Pueblo (under another WPA project). In all structures and buildings the stones were left uncut creating eight unique structures meant to be uniform in materials, but unique in style. The WPA encouraged spending funds on labor not on materials. Consequently, in order to complete projects, workers

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<sup>4</sup> Leonard, 81.

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used native materials and their own ingenuity. The structures and buildings of the Zoo demonstrate a rich example of local craftsmanship in using native materials.

The buildings and structures at the Zoo also demonstrate the growing trend toward naturalistic zoos. Carl Hagenback of Germany introduced the idea of placing animals in more natural settings in the early 1900s. He advocated the use of moats, artificial mountains, and pits as enclosures rather than barred cages. The Bear Pits, Mountain, and Monkey Moat reflect Hagenback's concepts. Despite funding limits and the use of much unskilled labor, the buildings and structures of the Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district were considered state of the art at the time.

In addition, the Mountain and Monkey Moat are examples of regional landscape architecture. Although the Mountain was planned as a component of an animal exhibit, it was quickly changed to a structure for human recreation. PWA workers began by landscaping the Mountain and WPA workers completed the work by adding the massive sandstone summit, bridges, rivers, and paths. Monkey Moat was designed to be an animal exhibit, but landscape techniques similar to those on the Mountain were employed on the island for the recreation of monkeys.

The Animal House is the only component in the complex containing a significant amount of art work. The WPA's Federal Art Project employed over 4,000 artists nationwide in an effort to create public art. Local sculptors were hired by the WPA to work on the Animal House after they were spotted making sand sculptures on the banks of the Arkansas River. These WPA artists completed the extensive relief work in all seventeen interior cages. They also contributed to the foyer fountain by sculpting decorative concrete alligators. On the exterior of the building, artists created sculptures of an ape, lion, and bear which were placed on the roof of the cupola. Additionally, a small monkey sculpture stands above the door between Monkey Moat and the Animal House.

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Pueblo City Park Zoo  
Name of Property

Pueblo, CO  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13      530050      4234780  
Zone      Easting      Northing

3. 13      530200      4234700  
Zone      Easting      Northing

2. 13      530200      4234770  
Zone      Easting      Northing

4. 13      530120      4234660  
Zone      Easting      Northing

[X] 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 Janet S. McFarland, Historical Consultant

organization Pueblo Zoological Society      date August 10, 1994

street & number 3455 Nuckolls Avenue      telephone 719-561-1452

city or town Pueblo      state CO      zip code 81005

#### 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 City of Pueblo

street & number 1 City Hall Place      telephone 719-584-0800

city or town Pueblo      state CO      zip code 81003

**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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**SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA--UTM REFERENCES**

5. 13,530000,4234720

**SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA--VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon on the USGS Quad map whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: 1) 13,530050,4234780; 2) 13,530200,4234770; 3)13,530200,4234700; 4) 13,530120,4234660; 5)13,530000,4234720

**SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA--BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

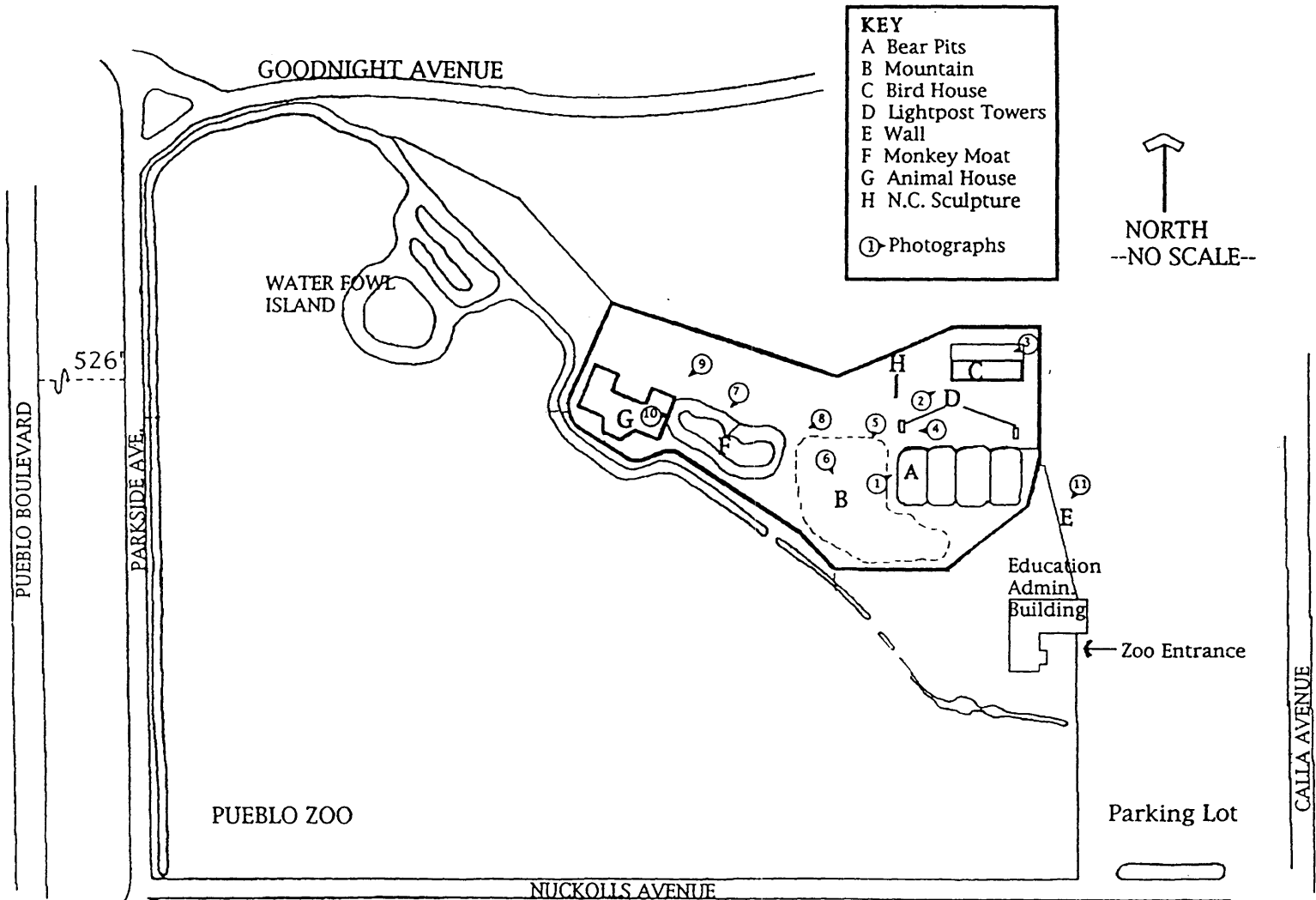
The Pueblo City Park Zoo historic district is contained within approximately 2.5 acres in the Pueblo Zoo. The boundaries for the district include a combination of the chain link fences that divide City Park from the Zoo (on the northern and eastern edges), stone walls built during the WPA period (on the southern edge), and the visual boundary where WPA construction ends and the modern structures of the Zoo begin (on the southern and western edges). These boundaries were chosen because of the continuity of materials and architecture in the two buildings and six structures built during the WPA period. Although the entire 30 acres existed as the Zoo in the 1930s, the area within the district boundaries is the only section that maintains its historic integrity.

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PUEBLO ZOO  
PUEBLO, PUEBLO COUNTY, COLORADO  
PUEBLO CITY PARK ZOO HISTORIC DISTRICT