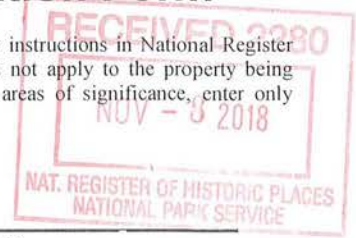


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

5G 3243

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: Firebird Raceway

Other names/site number: Idaho Historic Sites Inventory No. 01-23352

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 8551 Highway 16

City or town: Eagle State: Idaho County: Ada

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

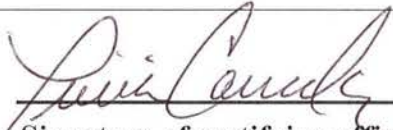
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B C D

	<u>11-7-18</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Idaho State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
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 or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

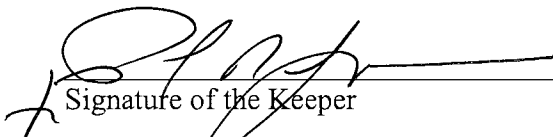
Firebird Raceway
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4. National Park Service Certification

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 of the Keeper

12/24/2010
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	objects
<u>21</u>	<u>13</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: utilitarian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Roof: METAL/Aluminum

Walls: CONCRETE

Foundation: CONCRETE; ASPHALT

Other: CONCRETE; ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes 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.)

Summary Paragraph

INTRODUCTION

Firebird Raceway is located near Eagle, Idaho, in Ada County on the west side of State Highway 16. The racing complex consists of approximately 60-acres, including the original strip and associated features of the raceway, which was completed in 1968. Located in a high-desert valley, the raceway is in close proximity to the Boise foothills and Boise National Forest. The boundary of the district forms an elongated polygon that runs parallel to the north-south route of State Highway 16.

Firebird Raceway is a quarter-mile drag racing facility measuring 3,350 feet in total length and consisting of a track, barrier walls, fencing, concessions, pit area, parking area, bleachers, and other associated features. The paved concrete track is aligned on a north-south axis with the start

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at the south end and the finish line at the north end and consists of – from standing start to the finish line – 1,320 feet of racing surface, followed by an asphalt “shutdown area” of 2,030 feet, which allows for the race cars to decelerate in order to safely exit the racing surface. The track spans 60 feet in total width and has a combination of concrete and steel barrier walls down its full length on both sides of the track. Concrete walls are used on the racing-strip portion of the track and steel walls are used in the “shutdown area” portion. Although modern upgrades have occurred at the complex, overall the Firebird Raceway retains good integrity and remains an important complex for drag racing in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest.

Narrative Description

LOCATION AND SETTING

Firebird Raceway is located along Idaho State Highway 16 near the city of Eagle in the Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho. The Treasure Valley encompasses rural high desert land consisting primarily of dry grass and sage brush and features a hilly terrain as it is at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The urban centers of the region are primarily around local towns and cities, like Boise, Meridian, and Eagle. Although development is focused around urban-city areas, sprawl is starting to impact the rest of State Highway 16. The Firebird Raceway is surrounded by rural farmland along State Highway 16, which primarily consists of sage brush and high desert environment. However, there are small developed pockets of residential properties on the western and southern sides of the Raceway.

Historically, the Raceway as a whole was developed so that the track is the lowest and flattest portion of the complex. The main road that leads to parking and pit areas slowly follows up the slope of a hilly terrain. The bleachers, concessions, ticketing booths, and pit areas are located along the slope and on the top of the hills. The elevation of the raceway is approximately 2,695 feet for the track, which lays at the lowest part of the property boundary. Whereas the remaining portion of the raceway is located on a slope along the western hillside. The majority of Firebird



2004 Nightfire Overhead Photo
(photo facing north)

Raceway features – strip, roads, parking – are at grade or level with the ground. The utilitarian structures and buildings – utility sheds, equipment sheds, medical, concessions, and restrooms – are the features that stand above ground level.

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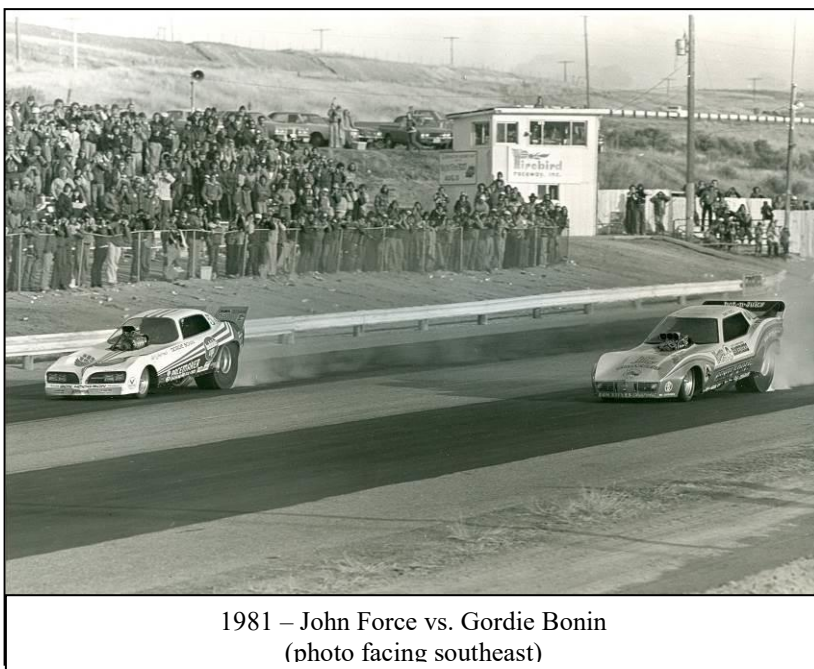
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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Located near Eagle, Idaho, the Firebird Raceway is a purpose-built dragstrip complex constructed in 1968 and is mostly intact. The location on a hilly terrain allowed the complex to accommodate early minor construction at the complex (control booth, concession, and restroom). For instance, the hillslope is used to accommodate stadium style seating on the east and west side of the track giving optimal views of the entire strip and primarily the starting line.¹

Currently, Firebird Raceway features the original paved dragstrip, which is a flat, linear structure constructed from

concrete and asphalt, along with paved pit spaces for racers and their crews, concessions, a timing tower and other amenities.



1981 – John Force vs. Gordie Bonin
(photo facing southeast)

Non-historic residential development now abuts the raceway, which originally stood alone and surrounded by sagebrush steppe. The raceway complex was specifically planned and designed to be located away from residential properties because of the inherent sound generated by the sport. The existing racing surface has sustained few alterations from its original construction aside from repairs that have been made for safety purposes. The width and paved appearance remain the same and is very comparable to the original track. In fact, many aspects of what existed when the track was first paved in 1968 still remain intact today. When Firebird Raceway originally opened, the track was paved as it is today.

One of the unique aspects of the complex at the time of construction – and continues to this day – is the placement of the racing surface. The track was originally positioned in a natural valley at the lowest point on the property. The track placement provides spectators with an opportunity to watch racing from a higher vantage point since both sides of the viewing areas gain elevation. In contrast, most drag racing venues sit on flat property; because of its unique construction, therefore, racing at Firebird offers race fans a perspective that is visually up-close and clear of obstructions.

¹ Originally the complex featured standing room only. In the 1970s, wood boards were added to the western side of the track to accommodate seating. In 1985, wooden grandstands were added to the western side of the track. In 2017-18 metal-aluminum, modern bleachers were added to both the western and eastern side of the track.

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The main vehicular entrance into the raceway complex is along a roadway that was once part of the original State Highway 16, before it was realigned to its current configuration in sometime in the 1950s-60s. After the entrance to the complex, one passes through the ticketing gates, and along the towerside seating; after which one passes the control tower and follows south along the raceway road, which is now paved. The parking areas (south parking lot, mountain parking lot) are located on the southern end of the complex and consist of open, grassy spaces with no delineated parking spaces. On the west side of the track, approximately midway down the quarter-mile track, is metal grandstand seating (pitside seating), which is located in the same location as the original wood grandstand.² The west side of the complex is home to a gravel parking area and a roadway known as the “pit area,” that funnels the race cars directly into three “staging lanes.” Staging lanes are where the cars begin to line up, “or stage,” to race. Two staging lanes are dedicated specifically to race cars and a third lane was created for safety and emergency access.

There is a concession stand halfway between the spectator grandstands and the racer pit area. In 2010, a new modern control tower was constructed to replace the original tower. Both the modern and original towers were located in the southeastern corner of the complex, adjacent to the “burn out area” and starting line.³ The burn out area is located at the starting line. The racers run their tires, or “burn out” to make the rubber of the tires hot, which creates more friction, or sticky tires allowing for greater connectivity to the track. The race control, or “timing tower,” is located on the northeast side of the starting line of the racetrack. Officials positioned in the tower are tasked with timing and announcing the race events with the new electronic timing system. A unique feature that still stands is the lights and light post system. After Firebird’s inaugural year



1972 – Snake vs. Mongoose Funny Cars (photo facing the starting line and Christmas tree, southeast)

in 1968, a state-of-the art track lighting system was installed which allowed for racing at night, and given the hot Treasure Valley summer temperatures, it proved to be an extremely beneficial

feature for both racers and fans.

² There was one wood grandstand seating area that was situated on the west side of the raceway, located approximately midway down the quarter-mile.

³ A race control tower was constructed on four wooden beams placed on each corner of the building. The initial construction was fairly rudimentary, and one year a carpenter’s ladder was used for access into and out of the enclosed timing tower.

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Additionally, track lighting was installed in the pit area so racers could more easily work on their cars between rounds of racing.

Steel guardrail barriers exist along the entire length of the strip and “shutdown area.” The existing barriers were installed in 1970 to protect the crowds from cars on the raceway. By the 1990s, concrete barricades were erected down both sides of the racetrack, making an even more secure facility for racers and fans alike. In 1978, a new concrete launch pad was installed at the starting line to improve traction for race cars, especially high horsepower cars that competed in Top Fuel, Funny Car, and Pro Stock classes. In the early years of racing at Firebird, the concrete extended to 60-feet per lane and was poured with a specialized high-early concrete mix created specifically for maximum traction. Over the next two decades, additional concrete was added down track to push the smooth surface to 400 feet. This addition also improved the “tacky” nature of the track’s surface, which, again, improves traction and consistency – two important elements to high horsepower cars.

INTEGRITY DISCUSSION

Overall, the district as a whole retains integrity of Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. The district’s setting and its historic contributing features convey the importance of the complex as a recreational sporting facility. The period of significance dates from initial construction in 1968 to 1978 after many of the important features (track, “shutdown area” parking, upper, central, and valley pit areas, seating, and more) were constructed, and they remain intact from the first ten years of the complex’s history.

As the sport technology and safety evolved, mechanical changes and upgrades were made to the district in order to meet current regulations of the National Hot Rod Association.⁴ When Firebird first opened in 1968, the track itself was entirely asphalt. Throughout the years, many important upgrades have been made to enhance not only the performance, but also the safety of the raceway. As the speed of race cars continued to accelerate at a rapid pace through 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, there was an inherent need to resurface the two competition lanes of the raceway. New pavement



1971 Races – Don the Snake

was put into place in the summer of 2000. Laser paving equipment was utilized to ensure maximum flatness and traction in order to enhance the original racing surface from 1968, which still exists under the upgraded surface. To further enhance the Firebird quarter-mile track, additional concrete was added to the surface, lengthening the concrete launch pads to 600 feet, providing optimal traction and performance for competitors.

⁴ See Section 8 – Significance for more information on the National Hot Rod Association.

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The mechanical and technological upgrades are modest and minimally invasive. Several features that have been upgraded (i.e. bleachers) have only changed in materials; the location, size, scale, and massing still remain to match that of the original. The changes made after the period of significance do not inherently render the district ineligible. Due to the continued use of the site and addition of new and upgrading features in the original location, the non-historic structures do not compromise the vital physical features which characterize the historic raceway, such as the valley and hillside landscape, the track, lighting systems, pit areas, "shutdown area," ticketing gates and the original raceway road system (entrance, pit road entrance, staging road, and return road).



2018 - Overview photo from the control tower looking north.

PROPERTY INVENTORY

The following list provides information specific to each item and property type located within the district. The inventory is arranged by association, either with the Spectators, the Racers or the Track, and includes the following information for each item: resource name, form, construction date (approximate), significant alteration dates (if known), and the eligibility status, as well as a description of the resource.

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Summary of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources:

Resource Number	Resource Type	Association	Date of Construction	Contributing/ Noncontributing
1	Ticketing Booths – Entrance	Spectators	1978	C
2	Ticketing Office	Spectators	2000	NC
3	South Parking Lot	Spectators	1968	C
4	Mountain Parking Lot	Spectators	1968	C
5	Bleachers – Pit Side Seating	Spectators	2017	NC
6	Bleachers – General Admission Seating	Spectators	2017	NC
7	Firebird Park/Stage	Spectators	1992	NC
8	Food & Beverage – Pit Side	Concessions	1973	C
9	Food & Beverage – Lower Pit Side	Concessions	1975	C
10	Food & Beverage – General Admission Side	Concessions	1979	C
11	Track Shop	Concessions	1972	C
12	Restrooms – Pit Road Entrance	Concessions	1985	NC
13	Restrooms – Return Road	Concessions	1978	NC
14	Central Pit Area	Racers	1968	C
15	Valley Pit Area	Racers	1980	NC
16	Pit Control	Racers	1973	C
17	Elapsed Time (E.T.) Booth	Racers	1975	C
18	Pit Water Well	Racers	1986	NC
19	Scales	Racers	1969	C
20	Firebird Safety Team	Racers	1998	NC
21	Pit Entrance Road	Racers	1968	C
22	Return Road	Racers	1968	C
23	Staging Lanes	Racers	1968	C
24	Lower Pit Maintenance Shop	Racers	1995	NC
25	Race Control Tower	Racers	2010	NC


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26	Barriers-Concrete	Track	1998	NC
27	Barriers-Steel	Track	1970	C
28	Score Boards	Track	1988	NC
29	Compulink Timing System	Track	1988	NC
30	Handicapper Box	Track	1972	C
31	Christmas Tree	Track	1968	C
32	Dragstrip/Burn Out	Track	1968	C
33	Shut down Area/ Run Off	Track	1968	C
34	Lighting	Track	1969	C

Resource No. 1	Ticketing Booths – Entrance
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	1978
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: The ticketing booths were originally located at pit entrance road in 1968. By 1978, new (and current) ticketing booths were constructed near the public track entrance/gates. The ticketing booths are very small (3 ft x 4 ft) narrow, wooden rectangular buildings with metal gabled-roofs. One entire long-side of booth is a door. The remaining three sides feature vinyl slider windows at counter height that are used to access the vehicles and collect entrance fees. The booths retain integrity from their construction date in 1978.</p>	
	

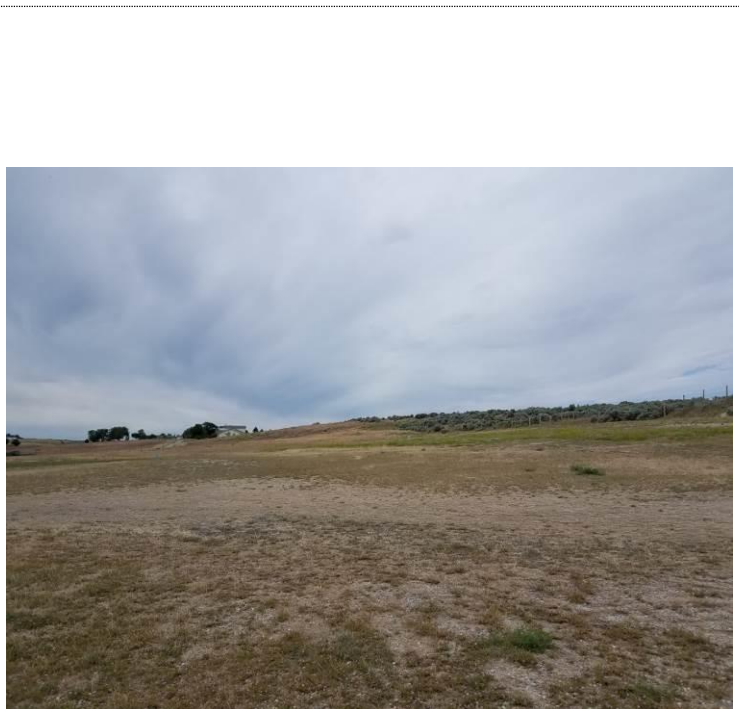
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Resource No. 2	Ticketing Office
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	2000
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: The ticketing office was constructed in 2000, next to the ticketing booths at the entrance to the raceway complex. It is a wooden rectangular building with a metal gabled-roof. On the west façade is the entrance and covered porch supported by metal posts. The building has a single vinyl slider window on each elevation. The ticketing office is outside the period of significance and is non-contributing to the district.</p>	



Resource Nos. 3, 4	South Parking Lot, Mountain Parking Lot
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Mowed Surface Lots
Construction/ Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: Both the south and mountain parking lots have been used since the complex construction in 1968. The parking lots feature open landscape and mowed lots. No permanent signage or paved surfaces have been added to the spectator parking. The parking lots contribute to the districts significance because of the nature of the complex. As a sporting facility, fans and spectators would drive to this specific place in order to participate in the sporting event. The location of the parking lots is also important as they are on the tops of the southern hillside giving a vantage point that overlooks the entire complex. The parking lots retain their historic integrity and contribute to the district and its sense of open, high desert setting.</p>	



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Resource Nos. 5, 6	Bleachers – Pit Side Seating, General Admission Seating
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Metal Stadium Stands
Construction/Alterations:	1968, 1973, 1985, 2017
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: Originally, the raceway featured standing room only for the spectators. In 1973 and 1985, wooden planks and then wooden bleachers were added to the east and west sides of the track allowing spectators seating. In 2017 all of the wooden bleachers were upgraded to meet current stadium seating safety standards with metal stadium-style bleachers. The metal bleachers are located in the same location, and are the same size and scale of the previous wooden bleachers. The metal bleachers do not detract from the overall historic appearance of the complex because they are in the same location as all previous seating at the complex. However, the metal bleachers are non-contributing to the district due to their material changes.</p>	



Resource No. 7	Firebird Park/Stage
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Mowed lawn, rectangular stage
Construction/Alterations:	1992
IHSI #:	

Description: The Firebird park and stage is a small triangular shaped lot of mown grass and some minor landscaped elements (rocks). The lot features a rectangular pavilion with one picnic table and a small shed. There is also a flag pole on the lot. Although the Firebird park/stage does not detract from the overall historic appearance of the complex, the park/stage are non-contributing to the district because they are outside the period of significance.



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Resource Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11	Food & Beverage: Pit side, Lower Pit side, General Admission side, Track Shop
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1973, 1975, 1979, 1972
IHSI #:	

Description: The food & beverage and track shop concessions were constructed in the 1970s. The concessions are rectangular wooden buildings with metal shed roofs and metal shed-awnings. The façade features one man-door located in the center of the building. On the north (left) side of the door are three cafeteria-style sliding counter doors that open vertically to accommodate spectators. The food & beverage stands retain their historic appearance, are utilitarian in design and function, and were added early in the district's construction as necessary additions to the overall spectator sporting complex. The stands contribute to the overall historic integrity of the district and retain their 1970s character.



Resource Nos. 12, 13	Restrooms: Pit Road Entrance, Return Road
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1985; 1978
IHSI #:	

Description: The restrooms were constructed outside the period of significance and are non-contributing to the overall district. The structures are made of concrete masonry units, wood, and feature metal roofs. The structures are completely utilitarian.



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Resource No. 14	Central Pit Area
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Trapezoidal Surface Parking
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	

Description: The central pit area is a system of paved and unpaved parking for competing racers, their equipment, and trailers. It is an original element of the district and was constructed in 1968. The roadway is paved for designated driving areas; whereas the parking and trailer areas are mown lawn. The central pit area retains its historic appearance, is utilitarian in design and function, and has necessary elements to the overall spectator sporting complex. The central pit contributes to the overall historic integrity of the district and retains its historic character.



Resource No. 15	Valley Pit Area
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Trapezoidal Surface Parking
Construction/Alterations:	1980
IHSI #:	

Description: The valley pit area is a system of paved and unpaved parking for competing racers, their equipment, and trailers. At one point (prior to 1980) this area of the complex was developed into a motocross racing track as the sport was becoming a new trend. The motocross track was rarely used and it was determined more space for competing racer parking was needed. The motocross track was leveled, and portions paved in the same manner as the central pit area. This later valley pit area retains integrity of its design but is out of the period of significance and therefore does not contribute to the overall district.



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Resource No. 16	Pit Control
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	1973
IHSI #:	

Description: The pit control is a wooden rectangular building with a covered teller window opening. The roof is a side gable in which one half of the gable covers the teller window opening. One side features a man-door and entrance to the small rectangular building. The pit control is an early necessity for the development of the complex and was constructed in 1973 within the period of significance. The building retains its historic utilitarian use and integrity and contributes to the recreational importance of the district.



Resource No. 17	Elapsed Time (E.T.) Booth
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	1975
IHSI #:	

Description: The E.T. booth is a wooden rectangular building with a covered teller window opening. The metal roof is a side gable in which one half of the gable covers the teller window opening. The E.T. booth is an early necessity for the development of the complex and was constructed in 1975 within the period of significance. The building retains its historic utilitarian use and integrity and contributes to the recreational importance of the sporting complex and district.



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Resource No. 18	Well House
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Pump
Construction/ Alterations:	1986
IHSI #:	

Description: Well house contains a pump to service the facility water system. The original well house was on the adjacent neighboring property. In 1986 a new water well was drilled on the eastern side of the central pit area. A well house rectangular building was constructed to accommodate the new well and pump. It is a necessity for the development of the sport and was constructed in outside the period of significance. The pit water well has a utilitarian use and but does not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource No. 19	Scale
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Flat-Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	1969
IHSI #:	

Description: The scale is a mechanical system consisting of a lower portion (the pan) that is buried in the ground and an upper portion (the graduated scale/sliding weight) which is located above ground so that is can be easily accessed by racers. At grade level, dragsters are driven onto a flat metal sheet that sits atop the lower portion mechanical system to determine the weight of the vehicle. Originally, dragsters were driven onto a wooden scale; however, with safety upgrades and the heavier weight of vehicles the scale was upgraded to metal. There is a wooden box that houses the original upper portion mechanical system adjacent to the at-grade scale. The scale is still used today and performs its original historic function and purpose. It retains its utilitarian use and historic characteristics and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



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Resource No. 20	Firebird Safety Team
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1998
IHSI #:	

Description: The Firebird safety team consists of two wooden rectangular buildings with metal gabled roofs. Both serve a utilitarian purpose to house the safety team's equipment and ambulance. The buildings were constructed in 1998 to aid the Firebird safety team. The buildings are a necessary development of the sport but were constructed outside the period of significance. The Firebird safety team buildings have a utilitarian use and but do not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource Nos. 21, 22, 23	Pit Entrance Road, Return Road, Staging Lanes
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Paved Surface
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	

Description: The transportation network at the complex is an importance factor. Pit entrance road guides the racers to the central and valley pit areas where the racers prepare the dragsters for racing, using the scales, cool down station, and parking. Return road connects the end of the strip back to the pit areas, E.T. booth, and pit control. The staging lanes are used when racers are lining up for the next round of racing. The staging lanes and return road are separated from the spectators to meet safety regulations and allow for a more efficient flow of transportation. All serve a utilitarian purpose and consist of a paved asphalt roadway linking the racers through each step of the race from arrival to cool down. The asphalt surfaces have been repaved; however, this is considered an intact replacement. The transportation network is an essential piece of the complex and its use as a recreational sporting facility. The transportation network retains its character defining features and historic integrity and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



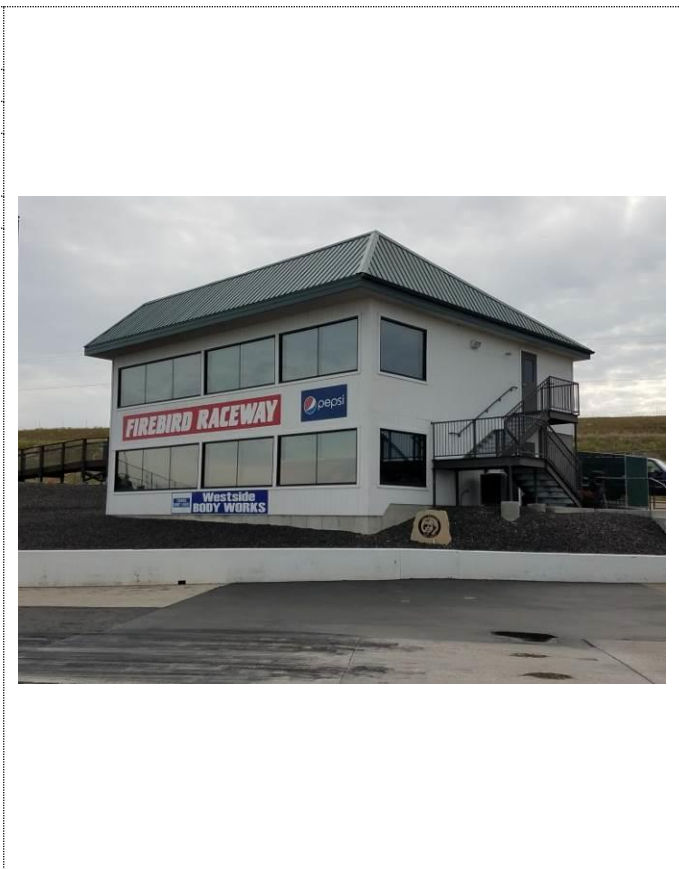
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Resource No. 24	Lower Firebird Safety Team
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Open, Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1995
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: The lower Firebird safety team is a series of three vehicle coverings consisting of metal post framing with a metal gabled roof. All serve a utilitarian purpose and are a necessity of the development of the complex. However, the structures were constructed outside the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.</p>	



Resource No. 25	Race Control Tower
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	2010
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: Originally the race control tower was a small wooden building that was accessible via ladder. In 1970 it was enlarged and enclosed with a stair. By 2010 the complex had outgrown the control tower and constructed the new race control tower in the same location as the original. It is a purpose-built wood/steel frame building with corporate suites and media center. The two story building is a large rectangle and the façade facing the strip features a bank of large fixed windows. On the southern elevation is a metal stair, and on the northern elevation is an accessible ramp to the second floor. The building serves a utilitarian purpose and is a necessity of the development of the complex. However, the tower was constructed outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.</p>	



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Resource No. 26	Barriers-Concrete
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Triangular
Construction/Alterations:	1998
IHSI #:	



Description: Originally steel barriers were added along the entire length of the strip and track. However, for increased safety measures for the spectators and the racers, the barriers along the length of the Strip (1/4 mile) were upgraded to triangular, tapered concrete wall. The barriers serve a safety and utilitarian purpose that is a necessity of the development of the complex. However, the concrete barriers were constructed outside the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource No. 27	Barrier-Steel
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Linear, Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1970
IHSI #:	



Description: Originally steel barriers were added along the entire length of the strip and track. However, for increased safety measures for the spectators and the racers, the barriers along the length of the strip (1/4 mile) were upgraded to tapered concrete wall barriers. The steel barriers remain along the length of the track from the finish line to the "shut-down area." The barriers serve a safety and utilitarian purpose that is a necessity of the development of the complex. The steel barriers were constructed in the period of significance and contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.

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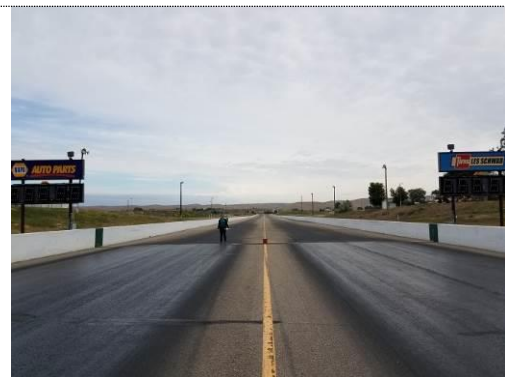
Resource No. 28	Score Boards
Eligibility:	Non-Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/ Alterations:	1988
IHSI #:	

Description: The score boards are located on the west and east side of the raceway at the finish line. The score boards were installed in 1988. Before this time, the win/lost light was the only indicator of who won and lost. The score boards are an essential part of the racing process and upgrades in the mechanical systems are a necessity to meet current racing standards. However, the score boards were constructed outside the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district. The score boards were constructed outside the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource No. 29	Compulink Timing System
Eligibility:	Non-contributing
Form:	None
Construction/ Alterations:	1968, 1988
IHSI #:	

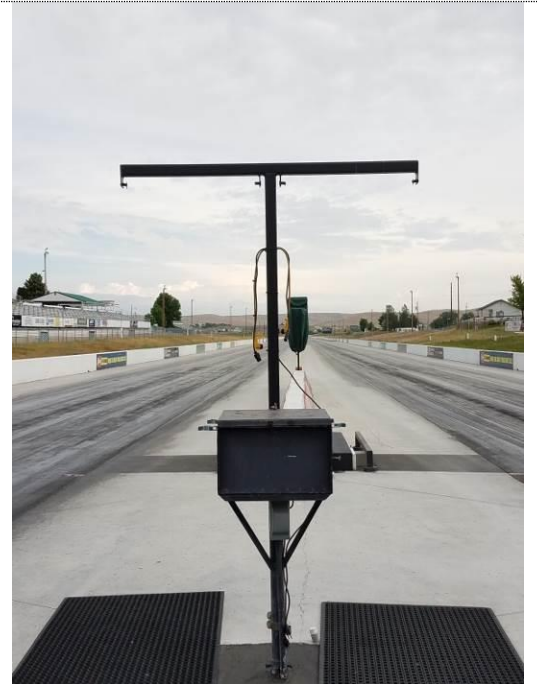
Description: The original timing system was the Newtronics Timing System which was an early design for timing accuracy. The timing systems are made up of a series of lights placed equal distance along the length of the strip. A small square notch is cutout of the concrete barriers to retain the timing system. Incremental times are recorded and printed at intervals of 60', 330', 550', 1000', and 1320' distances for every pair of vehicles that run down the Firebird dragstrip. The Compulink Timing System is in the original location of the previous timing system and does not detract from the integrity of the district. The Compulink Timing System is an essential part of the racing process and upgrades in the mechanical systems are a necessity to meet current racing standards. It was upgraded outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



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Resource No. 30	Handicapper Box
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular
Construction/Alterations:	1972
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: The handicapper box is a fabricated steel black box at the starting line that was the platform for the original electronic handicapper box. A handicapped start allows a slower car to leave the starting line first, followed by the faster car. The handicap helps to create a fair race between two vehicles that run differing elapsed times. The box today serves as the location of the starter cable, which assists the starter in initiating every pair of vehicle down the raceway. Handicapping is conducted in the race control tower timing computer. The handicapper box controls the starting signals from the christmas tree. The box serves an essential function for the racing events. The box was constructed in the period of significance and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.</p>	



Resource No. 31	Christmas Tree
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Rectangular Object
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	
<p>Description: The Christmas tree is named for the multicolored light signaling system used at the starting line of the strip. It is a fabricated steel object. The Christmas tree serves an essential function for the start of all racing events. The electronic mechanical system has been upgraded; however, the Christmas tree retains the integrity of the original historic object. The Christmas Tree was constructed in the period of significance and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.</p>	



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Resource No. 32	Dragstrip
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Linear
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	



Description: The dragstrip is the cornerstone of the Firebird Raceway complex. Built in 1968, the dragstrip is made of a concrete mixture that when combined with heat creates a “sticky” pavement for the dragsters. Before the start line is the asphalt “burn out area” which is repaired often as the racers heat up the tires of the dragsters before racing to make the tires “stick” to the concrete strip. The strip measures 60 feet in width and 1,320 feet long (quarter mile) from standing start to the finish line. Some portions of the concrete have been repaired over time, but the dragstrip is in the original location, design, setting, and uses the same materials and workmanship for repairs. The dragstrip is the most important piece of the district and is essential to the entire purpose and creation of the entertainment sporting complex. The dragstrip dates to 1968 and is within the period of significance and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource No. 33	Shutdown Area/Runoff
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Linear
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	

Description: The shutdown area and runoff are a continuation of the dragstrip track. The shutdown area is constructed of asphalt and measures 60 feet in width and 2,030 feet in length. At the end of the asphalt is an open field used for racers that drive past the shutdown area. This area is used for the racers to decelerate in order to safely exit the racing surface and features steel Armco barrier walls. Some portions of the asphalt



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have been repaired over time, but the shutdown area/runoff is in the original location, design, setting, and uses the same materials and workmanship for repairs. The shutdown area is an important piece of the district and is essential to the purpose of the entertainment sporting complex. The shutdown area dates to 1968, is within the period of significance, and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



Resource No. 34	Lighting
Eligibility:	Contributing
Form:	Object
Construction/Alterations:	1968
IHSI #:	

Description: In 1968, a state-of-the art track light system was installed along the full length of the Track. The original lighting system consists of telephone poles with 110W light bulbs attached to the very top of the pole. In 1992, the bulbs were updated to 220W to create more energy efficiency. The light system is a unique feature at Firebird, as most dragstrips do not have lighting or offer night races. The lighting is an important piece of the district and is essential to the purpose of the entertainment sporting complex. Firebird Raceway was the only lighted track in Idaho when constructed. Although the bulbs/electrical mechanics have been upgraded the lighting system and poles still retain integrity of design, location, setting, and materials. The lighting dates to 1968, is within the period of significance, and contributes to the historic appearance and overall integrity of the district.



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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1968 - 1978

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Criterion Consideration:

Firebird Raceway is eligible for Criterion Consideration G: having gained significance within the past fifty years. Although the foundational elements of the district (interconnecting roadway system, spectator parking, pit areas, staging lanes, timing tower, Christmas tree, bleachers, strip, run off, scales, lighting, and barriers) were all established within the first 2 years of the sporting complex, several other essential elements to the composition of the district were in place by 1978

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– the first ten years of the sporting complex. By 1978, the district included additional crucial elements such as: track shop (1972), handicapper box (1972), concessions (1973 & 1975), pit control (1973), E.T. Booth (1975), and the ticketing booths (1978). As the sport of drag racing developed additional elements were necessary to participate in a race, such as: pit control, E.T. Booths, and entrance/ticketing booths. These elements were incorporated in the key second phase of the development at Firebird Raceway.

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.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

Due to the technical terminology used in this nomination, a glossary of common racing terms has been included at the end of the narrative section.

Firebird Raceway is significant at the state level under *Criterion A*, in Entertainment and Recreation, and more specifically to the Drag Racing industry in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. Firebird is a major drag racing venue in the Pacific Northwest and one of the premiere dragstrip venues in the country, and has been for 50 years. Nationally recognized events like the Ignitor Nitro Opener, Nightfire Nationals, and Halloween Classic are preeminent major races attended by racers and fans from around the country, Canada, and other nations. Events brought people around the state together for hot rod sporting activities and to participate in hot rod events at Firebird. There were a handful of dragstrips around the state measuring eighth-mile lengths, but Firebird Raceway was the only quarter-mile strip, which attracted numerous hot rod participants. As the only extant quarter-mile track in Idaho, Firebird Raceway's presence in Ada County has brought and continues to bring statewide attention to the sport of drag racing.

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

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DRAG RACING

When asked to describe the early days of drag racing Don Jensen – a prominent drag racer in the 1950s – replied, “We started with a clean slate. All that was needed was for the car to start and with luck stop afterwards, but that wasn’t mandatory and many didn’t.”⁵ Such was the gung-ho

⁵ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 13.

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attitude of the early hot rodding pioneers of the 1950s. Much has changed in the decades since then – for instance, stopping racers at the end of runs has since become and is considered a staple of sport safety – but the enthusiasm and innovation of the participants has never wavered.

Americans have been racing cars for nearly as long as cars have existed. Drag racing in particular traces its roots back to the dry lake bed races of the 1930s. Many of these races took place in California’s Mojave Desert, and some speed enthusiasts were already heading out to the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah to try to set the Land Speed Record.⁶ Street racing, however, the true precursor to drag racing, didn’t take off until after World War II. In his book, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990*, Robert C. Post states the reason for the sudden popularity of street racing as, “There were thousands of unmarried males, many of them ex-GIs, with plenty of spare dollars, enhanced mechanical skills, an assertive bent, and a love of speed.”⁷



1971 – Firebird Raceway, Jim Rockstad vs. Steve McGee

While it is not certain where the term “drag race” comes from (some theories include racing on the main “drag” through town or reference drivers “dragging” through the gears), it is known that it became popular with these short street races in the late 1940s.⁸ Many of these street races were illegal and therefore highly dangerous; however, on occasion, the authorities would agree to close a short section of road for a

morning to allow a legal race. One such occurrence happened

on a Sunday in 1949 in Goleta, CA, an event known to some as “The Day Drag Racing Began.”⁹ Two other “official” races were held in 1949, one in California and one in Utah.¹⁰ While street racing had already been happening before this, these events gave some hot rodders the idea of finding a place where legal races could be held more regularly.

⁶ Ibid, xx.

⁷ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 4.

⁸ Nitto Admin, The History of Drag Racing, Driving Line, <https://www.drivingline.com/articles/the-history-of-drag-racing/> (accessed May 3, 2018).

⁹ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 1-3.

¹⁰ Nitto Admin, The History of Drag Racing, Driving Line, <https://www.drivingline.com/articles/the-history-of-drag-racing/> (accessed May 3, 2018).

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In stepped C.J. Hart, who rented a spare, unused runway from a Santa Ana airport. Starting on June 19, 1950, the Santa Ana Drags would host a race day every Sunday (and some Saturdays) for the next ten years.¹¹ The rules for Hart's races would become standard for all drag races: two cars at a time, first to the finish wins with elapsed time and top speed being recorded, and length was a quarter mile distance. While eighth mile and thousand foot races exist, the quarter mile is considered the standard length of a drag race and many theories speculate on why this is the case. One is that it is a tie to quarter-horse racing; another that is a hold-over of the length of city blocks used in street racing.¹² The most popular theory is that a quarter mile was the length that racers could drive at the Santa Ana runway and still have room to slow down afterwards.¹³ As more drag strips opened up at abandoned or unused runways, the quarter mile length stuck. By 1951, several other strips had opened in California, and by the end of the decade there would be drag strips in various parts of the country.¹⁴

As drag strips and legal races became more prevalent, some organizational minds felt the need to establish an official governing body to help legitimize and standardize the sport. One such mind was that of Wally Parks, who founded the National Hot Rod Association in 1951. The goal, according to Lee Ryan – staffer at *Hot Rod*, who helped start the NHRA – speaking in 1952, was “to transform the hot rod movement from a disorganized, sporadic, rudderless activity into an integrated, regulated and supervised sport.”¹⁵ In 1953, the NHRA sanctioned its first race at Pomona, California and it has been the major sanctioning body ever since.¹⁶



1972 – Firebird Raceway, Fuel Alteredds

It was not, however, the only one. 1957 marked the start of a fuel ban, which began at Santa Ana and was then enforced at all NHRA sanctioned strips. The fuel ban required that all dragsters and hot rods run on pump gasoline only; nitromethane, which was used by some racers, was a banned substance. Ostensibly this was to make racing safer – many officials believed that at

¹¹ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 6-7.

¹² Nitto Admin, The History of Drag Racing, Driving Line, <https://www.drivingline.com/articles/the-history-of-drag-racing/> (accessed May 3, 2018).

¹³ Tim Bernsau, Drag Racing Origins – The Guys Who Invented Drag Racing, Hot Rod Network, <http://www.hotrod.com/articles/091-irc-drag-racing-origins/#> (accessed May 4, 2018).

¹⁴ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 8, 24.

¹⁵ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 54.

¹⁶ Nitto Admin, The History of Drag Racing, Driving Line, <https://www.drivingline.com/articles/the-history-of-drag-racing/> (accessed May 3, 2018).

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160+mph dragsters were getting too fast and did not have enough time to slow down (parachutes wouldn't be used until 1959). In addition, "nitro" ran a risk of causing engine explosions.¹⁷

Despite these safety concerns, many racers were frustrated with the fuel ban and wanted to find ways to continue racing on nitro. This led Jim Tice, a former member of the NHRA, to form the American Hot Rodding Association in 1956. Despite often sanctioning races at smaller drag strips, the AHRA remained popular even after the NHRA ended their fuel ban in 1964, due to their constant allowance of measures or tactics that the NHRA would ban.¹⁸ Eventually, the AHRA closed its doors in 1984 due to the passing of the original founder, Jim Tice. One other sanctioning body that is still around is the International Hot Rod Association, formed in 1971 by drag racers and drag strip owners tired of the NHRA.¹⁹ Despite these rivalries, the NHRA remains the dominate voice in the world of North American drag racing.

Drag racing may have officially started in California but it soon spread across the U.S. and the world – a distinctly American sport popular with anyone who likes to soup-up a car to accelerate as much and as quickly as possible. While California was the first state to embrace drag racing, Utah soon did the same. This is perhaps unsurprising as Utah is the home of the Bonneville Salt Flats, an area west of Salt Lake City where speed enthusiasts from around the world have gathered to try and break the Land Speed Record since the turn of the twentieth century. To this day, the Southern California Timing Commission – a Wally Parks organization that was a precursor to the NHRA – still hosts Bonneville Speed Week.²⁰ After Utah, drag strips spread to Colorado, Texas, and states further east like Missouri and Ohio, eventually finding homes in New England and Florida.²¹ Drag racers tended to stick to either the West or East side of the country, despite an increasing number of racers participating in circuits during the 1960s. This was due to the expensive travel times and costs, especially as dragsters were not highway legal and had to be towed. Such a separation led to an intense East-West rivalry that was certainly helped by the fact that drag racing was both born in and more popular in the West where it didn't compete with stock car racing.²²

As baby boomers became young adults in the 1960s and 1970s, they brought their own unique style to drag racing. Cars became more colorful, and more classes were developed (i.e., the funny car). There were racers who became the legends of the sport, such as Don Garlits, Don Prudhomme, and Shirley Muldowney. Women and children began attending races in greater numbers as well, causing racing to increasingly become a more family affair. This would lead directly into the 1980s and 1990s when many of those directly involved in drag racing were the sons and daughters of those who had come before.

¹⁷ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 50.

¹⁸ Ibid, 58-59, 79.

¹⁹ Nitto Admin, The History of Drag Racing, Driving Line, <https://www.drivingline.com/articles/the-history-of-drag-racing/> (accessed May 3, 2018).

²⁰ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 211, 329.

²¹ Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 24.

²² Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 62-64.

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While drag racing is inherently about getting from point A to point B as quickly as possible, many participants and promoters have also long recognized that the sport is a form of entertainment. In 1965, a new class known as the funny car – so named because they looked like stock cars but “sorta funny” – was introduced as a way to attract more spectators who “wanted to see cars like theirs” to drag races.²³ Many promoters would bring in acts that had little to nothing to do with the races themselves, such as jet cars or rock bands for concerts. A popular act at many drag strips was the daredevil, Evel Knievel, who performed stunts inevitably drawing large crowds out to the drag strip.²⁴



1995 – Firebird, Shockwave Jet Truck

Drag racing has seen many changes since its origins in the 1940s and 1950s, in aspects from classes and designs of cars to safety regulations and to the makeup of the participants. In the 1950s, drag racing was largely the purview of young men. By 1990, many aspects of the sport, from drag strip ownership to dragster teams, were family affairs. Robert Post writes, “Couples often competed as a team, and a second generation had emerged which defined and pursued existence just as its parents did.”²⁵ Enthusiasm for the sport and the technology have become central to

the lives of many drag racing families, and it is this passion and these family ties that keep the sport going.²⁶

In many ways, drag racing has grown bigger than any of the original participants could have imagined. There is an official NHRA circuit every year, and official championship. There are big money sponsorships with both automotive and non-automotive corporations. There is the spread of the sport itself from the American West to places as diverse as Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Japan.²⁷ Despite this, drag racing and its many enthusiasts have stayed true to its roots. Many strips are still locally owned, and host events for local amateurs to race their souped-up cars which they have worked on at home. Yet this presence so close to local communities has also been the downfall of many drag strips. Nearly all of the historic California strips, including Santa Ana, have closed due to airport needs, buyout from land developers, or

²³ Ibid, 135, 140, 142.

²⁴ Ibid, 157.

²⁵ Ibid, 258, 279.

²⁶ Ibid, 281.

²⁷ Ibid, 325, 327.

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noise complaints from local residents.²⁸ In Idaho, the founders of Firebird Raceway opted to use open, high desert land with no surrounding development in order to build a more permanent raceway. Firebird Raceway was the only quarter-mile strip and sporting venue in Idaho and remains today the only quarter-mile dragstrip in the state.

A RACE

According to the NHRA's official website, "A drag race is an acceleration contest from a standing start between two vehicles over a measured distance."²⁹ One-eighth or one-quarter mile tracks are the standard distances, with one-quarter mile being more traditional. To start, two racers pull into their respective lanes. Each will perform a burnout, then pre-stage, then stage. The Christmas Tree alerts the drivers when to begin their run; the racing class determines whether a Full Tree or Pro Tree will be used. On a Full Tree, "The three amber bulbs on the Christmas Tree flash consecutively five-tenths of a second apart, followed five-tenths later by the green starting light."³⁰ On a Pro Tree, "All three... amber lights... flash simultaneously, followed four-tenths of a second later by the green starting light."³¹ In either case, the racers take off at the green light. The goal is to be the fastest down to the finish line, and this is measured both in elapsed time and top speed.

Robert C. Post, author of *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990*, described his experience as a spectator at his first race in the 1950s thus:

To begin with, there was the noise. I had heard unmuffled exhaust before but never engines that were 'full house,' far too souped-up to be fit for the street. Then there was the smell – smoking rubber, of course, but more distinctive were the fumes emitted by engines running on 'fuel.' Gasoline was a fuel, to be sure, but it was not fuel... what I learned soon enough was that the most pungent and eye-smarting exhaust was produced by a compound called nitro-methane, 'nitro' for short....

And then there was the speed. I had driven some pretty strong machinery in street trim, prewar Ford coupes; the best could turn 100 miles per hour in the quarter mile, with elapsed times around 14 seconds, and, believe me, that kind of acceleration got your attention. On the drag strip I saw Spartan fuel-burning roadsters and 'rail jobs' clocking 120s in less than 12 seconds, and to me that was absolutely fascinating.³²

²⁸Robert C. Post, *High Performance: The Culture and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 21, 328.

²⁹"NHRA 101," NHRA, <https://www.nhra.com/nhra-101> (accessed May 3, 2018).

³⁰"Glossary of drag racing terms," Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130903044153/http://www.nhra.com/glossary.aspx> (accessed May 3, 2018).

³¹ *ibid*

³² Post, Robert C., *High Performance: The Cultural and Technology of Drag Racing 1950-1990*, 1994, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, xi.

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From a racer's perspective, the acceleration from the starting line and a "standing start" to a speed of 100, 200, or even 300 miles per hour to the finish line and shutdown area is quite the adrenalin rush. To do this alongside an opponent, on a narrow 60-foot wide dragstrip, attempting to beat your opponent to the quarter-mile finish line, adds yet another element to drag racing that is very compelling and persuasive to not only the competitor, but the fans in the grandstands.

Racing occurs between a wide variety of vehicles: cars, trucks, motorcycles, drag sleds, junior dragsters, and other kinds of vehicles – and all of which line up in Firebird's Central and Valley Pit areas. The sport is commonly split into two types of racing: sportsman and professional. Sportsman racers include people of all walks of life who can participate in their own daily race cars. Other racers construct purpose-built cars in order to compete and perform at the quickest



2005 – Firebird, ProModified Door slammers at Nightfire Race

and highest performance levels possible down the dragstrip. In the professional ranks, teams invest significant funds to race at the highest level. These race cars (i.e.-Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Modified and the like) often have teams comprised of multiple crew members and sophisticated racing transports that bring multiple engines and parts to major events. In the end, the motivating factor or element of drag racing, whether sportsman or professional, is giving it your best effort to beat

your opponent. Rewards include prize money, awards, and championship titles at the local, regional, and national levels.

The competition element of drag racing is unique today as the races are defined in several ways. What is known as "handicapped bracket racing" is the primary style of racing offered at the Firebird complex and the majority of tracks nationwide, which is why the dragstrip features a handicapper box located at the starting line. Prior to bracket racing, competition was staged between two cars featuring similar engine sizes. For instance, a 350 cubic inch Chevy Camaro would run "heads-up" (heads up means leaving the starting line of the race track at exactly the same time) against a 351 cubic inch Ford Mustang. Racers would attempt to build maximum horsepower down the dragstrip from start to finish, and win a contest by having the quickest and fastest car in competition. Originally, it became a sport where cubic inches and cubic dollars (and time) would win races.

CLASS RACING

In the early years of organized drag racing, this heads-up racing was known and conducted as "class" racing. Racers would gather in the Central and Valley Pit areas and compete in specific classes like: A/Gas, B/Modified Production, Super Stock/C, Stock Automatic/D, etc. Each class would take turns approaching the staging lanes, then the starting line and "burn out." In those early years, the sport was very expensive to compete in, and the life of an engine or

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“powerplant” was limited due to the nature of the racing. Organized drag racing venues were struggling to stay afloat because the soaring cost of these high-priced engines. The sophisticated dyno testing (in a machine shop) and the cost to race became exorbitant to tow the hot rod to the track (Firebird), unload and prep the hot rod in the Pit Areas, fire the engine into the staging lanes, and then down the dragstrip. Afterwards, in the shutdown area, racers would need to tow their cars and lead the hot rods along Return Road back into the Pit areas.

HANDICAP BRACKET RACING

However, when bracket racing was invented and built upon in the early 1970s, it offered racers an opportunity to pre-select what is known as a dial-in during race eliminations. Racing participants would make time trials or “practice” runs during the early part of the race day. After making several time trials, racer “A” would head to the E. T. Booth and might end up with elapsed times of 12.04, 12.06 and 12.05 seconds. Prior to the first round of eliminations (the race against another racer) racer “A” would select his or her “dial-in”, which would be input into the Compulink Timing System, based on the average performance of the elapsed time from the practice runs. In this case, racer “A” might select a 12.05 as a “dial-in.” Similarly, racer “B” might have run 10.68, 10.70, and 10.74 in time trials, so racer “B” might select a “dial-in” time of 10.75.

Therefore, in handicap bracket racing, to establish a handicap start (handicapper box), racer “A” with the 12.05 dial-in leaves first from the lighted Christmas tree start and driver “B” launches from the starting line second based on the dial-in selections, which computes to 12.05 minus 10.75 or a net difference of 1.30 seconds. The handicap difference at the Christmas Tree is 1.30 seconds – so driver “A” actually leaves the starting line 1.30 seconds before Driver “B.” This is the essence of the “handicap” start and the purpose of the handicapper box. The goal of each driver is to race down the dragstrip, reach the finish line first, and complete the race as close to their selected dial-in time as possible. For example, when racing at Firebird Raceway, should you cross the finish first and run 10.76 on a 10.75 dial, you are deemed the winner by the Compulink Timing System. If racer B races under the selected dial-in of 10.76 with an elapsed time of 10.74, this is called a breakout or automatic loss. In the case of both racers running under the selected dial-in, the racer breaking out the least is declared the winner.

Bracket racing or handicapped bracket racing provides an ingenious way to equalize the competition in the sport of drag racing. Over many decades, drag racing has continued to grow in popularity and interest. Part of this success is due to the invention of this bracket style of racing, which is offered at the majority of dragstrips in North America including Firebird Raceway – the only remaining quarter-mile bracket racing dragstrip in Idaho.

GRUDGE RACING

Another form of activity at the raceway is known as grudge racing. Quite often racers will attend a grudge race specific event. At Firebird, events like the Midnight Drags offer unlimited grudge heats where a racer can “challenge” his or her friend, family member, or neighbor to a heads up, “first one to the finish line is the winner” style of racing. These events provide an opportunity for a wide variety of cars or trucks to compete without the pressure of selecting a dial-in and competing in a handicapped bracket eliminator. Grudge racing quite often is staged in the

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evening and at night under Firebird's unique lighting system. This form of racing has grown impressively over the years, largely due to the popularity of both the sport compact or import style of car and the reemergence of muscle cars (like the Mustang, Camaro, Challenger, Cadillac CTS and many other brands). Grudge racing is a fun way to enjoy a personal daily driver type of a vehicle while competing at an approved dragstrip where a driver can legally race as quickly as performance of the vehicle allows.

DRAG RACING IN IDAHO

Drag racing first became popular in Idaho in the 1950s. By 1960, racers could compete in two locations: Gowen Field Road (Boise) and Pocatello Drag Strip (Pocatello).³³ Located in the City of Boise in southwest Idaho, Gowen Field was an airfield built to use as a base for training bomber crews for World War II. After WWII, the property was returned to the City of Boise, and today is leased by the Idaho Air National Guard. Dragsters came to race on the county road running adjacent to the airfield from 1954 to 1961, when the sport was first gaining popularity in the area.³⁴ From 1954 to 1973, dragsters on the eastern side of the state would race along the municipal airway strip in Pocatello.³⁵ Races were held there periodically until the strip needed too much repair. In 1973, the City of Pocatello declined to renew the lease for the strip due to other environmental concerns.

In the 1960s the sport took on new heights in southwestern Idaho with the opening of two more tracks: Firebird Raceway (Eagle), and Thunder Ridge Raceway (Star). Firebird was one of the first quarter-mile tracks opened in Idaho and the only quarter-mile purpose built track that remains open today. Thunder Ridge Raceway in Star, Idaho opened in 1967 as a 4,000 foot dragstrip, but six years after its opening (1973) the strip was closed and no longer used for drag racing; it was instead turned into a local airport.³⁶

Today, Idaho is home to a quarter-mile purpose built track – Firebird Raceway, and two non-sanctioned eighth-mile tracks: Sage Raceway (Idaho Falls), and Snake River Dragway (Gooding). Sage Raceway is a newly founded dragstrip in Idaho Falls. The owner grew up racing on the track in Pocatello, and after realizing it had closed decided to open his own dragstrip in Idaho Falls.³⁷ In 1972, a group started Gooding Dragstrip, later renamed High Desert Speedway in Gooding, Idaho at a local unused runway. Currently, the group called Sage Raceway owns and operates the eighth-mile racing strip, constructed on a site originally used for the takeoff and landing of crop-dusting planes.³⁸

³³ Drag Strip List: A Comprehensive Exyclopedia, "Idaho." Mel Bashore, <http://dragstriplist.com/idaho> (accessed July 9, 2018).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Sage Raceway LLC, "About Us." Terry Ray, <http://sageraceway.com/about/> (accessed July 9, 2018).

³⁸ Snake River Dragway: Home of the Outlaws, "About Us." <https://srdragway.com/> (accessed July 9, 2018).

Both names "Snake River Dragway" and "High Desert Speedway" are associated with the same dragstrip location. The name of the location and activity has changed over time.

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HISTORY OF FIREBIRD RACEWAY

The Firebird Raceway is a member track of the National Hot Rod Association (“NHRA”). Since its founding by Wally Parks in 1951, the NHRA has been dedicated to safety while providing millions of racing fans with the fastest and most spectacular form of entertainment on wheels. Parks initially started NHRA as a means of encouraging hot rodders onto legal drag strips and off the streets. Since its early days, NHRA has evolved into the largest promoter of professional drag racing in the world.³⁹

Bill J. New, the original founder of Firebird Raceway, had deep roots in hot rodding and drag racing in Idaho dating back to the early 1950s. He was an original member of the car club known as the Bootleggers in Boise. The club helped to orchestrate, organize, and approve drag racing contests on Gowen Field Road, just south of the Boise Airport. These temporary events were staged between two hot rods or race cars with the approval of the city officials and the police department as a way to diminish high speed racing contests on city streets and highways. These events attracted the attention of the National Hot Rod Association in 1954. Based on their interest in the Bootleggers organized races in Boise, the NHRA sent Field Director, Bud Coons to finding a satisfactory drag racing strip.

Along with fellow hot rodding friends and enthusiasts, New attended the first two NHRA Safety Safari Drag Meets in eastern Idaho on an abandoned air base west of Pocatello in 1954 and 1955. These two events were Idaho’s first major drag races at a facility specifically established to host quarter-mile drag racing contests.

New’s participation in these races inspired him to not only race more frequently, but motivated him and a number of his friends to move to southern California to compete at several original dragstrips like Lions Dragstrip, San Gabriel Raceway, Santa Ana Drags, and a track built on the L.A. County Fairgrounds in Pomona. As New was living in California, racing, and learning from many of drag racing’s founding fathers, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and subsequently stationed in Germany. Upon returning to Idaho in the early 1960s, New was determined to create and organize drag racing facility for racers and fans to enjoy.

New first had the idea of constructing and organizing a drag racing facility in Idaho’s Treasure Valley in the 1960s. Several locations were considered for a drag racing facility with two locations receiving more serious consideration – one near Highway 55 off the road to Horseshoe Bend and one about a mile north of the intersection of Eagle Road and Chinden Boulevard. However, both were eventually deemed too close to residential homes and therefore considered unusable for a dragstrip. The focus then moved to a piece of property owned and dry farmed by Dan and Beatrice Land located off Idaho State Highway 16. The property was originally

³⁹ National Hot Rod Association: Championship Drag Racing, “About NHRA,” <https://www.nhra.com/about-nhra> (accessed December 2017).

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homesteaded but by the 1960s was no longer being farmed and was sitting vacant, and was composed predominately of rolling terrain covered in sagebrush.

Originally, three people joined together to form a corporation to buy the property and build the raceway. The three original principals were Robert Blazier, Ron Ashley, and Bill New. The trio commissioned Wayne Wright Construction to create, excavate, and pave the initial footprint for the race track. The property was perfect for a dragstrip: its location was central to Ada County and was ideal relative to the projected future growth trends of the populations of greater Ada, Canyon, and Gem counties. Once Bill New purchased this tract of land, a construction team was hired to purpose-build the dragstrip that would become the anchor for Firebird Raceway, the first in western Idaho. New pictured that racers could pilot their race cars from south to north, thereby keeping the sun behind them – whether they competed in the morning, afternoon, or at nightfall. In 1968, Firebird was complete and ready to host its first race. The first event was staged on July 29, 1968, attracting a standing room only crowd of fans – around 4,000 people coming from all over the state. Spectators watched the first feature vehicle to perform at the raceway, the “Hemi Under Glass” wheelstanding Barracuda driven by Bob Riggle.

In the track’s early years, the principals employed a number of efforts to attempt to attract fans to the raceway. One such exhibition involved the appearance of Evel Knievel in 1969. The daredevil motorcycle rider jumped his Laverda American Eagle 750 cc motorcycle over a number of vehicles while wearing his famous white jumpsuit covered in confederate stars and blue stripes in front an enthusiastic crowd.

Firebird has not only been home to motorsports. On July 18, 1972, Alice Cooper – the provocative rock star – brought his “School’s Out” Tour to Firebird, which was promoted by Great Western Productions. At the time, it was the single largest one-day crowd to attend a concert of any type in the state of Idaho. An estimated 9,000 people attended, overwhelming the outdoor racing facility on an unseasonably chilly summer night. Cooper, who arrived late that night following his concert the previous night in Salt Lake City, Utah, brought his famous python and an over-the-top stage show, which included the opening band Fat Chance of Boise who had to substitute for the Dr. Hook & Medicine Show, which cancelled the morning of the major event.

Many events at Firebird have garnered national prominence and recognition. The track’s signature and ongoing event is the Nightfire Nationals. This event was first coined the Nightfire 500 in 1972. Former Nightfire champions have included many of the premiere racers in the sport of drag racing; winners include the likes of John Force, Don Prudhomme, Raymond Beadle’s “Blue Max”, and many others. The event today is aligned with the NHRA’s Heritage Series, which is a points championship chased by racing teams from all over the nation in both Top Fuel and Funny Car classes. The Nightfire, which is staged the second weekend of August, features racing under the stadium lights. Both the exciting elements of “night” and “fire” combine for an amazing fan experience. Race teams from a number of states and Canada all vie for a purse topping \$170,000.00 in prize money. Each year, over 20,000 fans and close to 400 racers participate in this four-day event.

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Firebird's oldest ongoing event is the Ignitor Nitro Opener, which began in 1971. This event is part of the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Race Series, one of 45 regional stops for sportsman racers, along with a points race in the NHRA Hot Rod Heritage series for the Funny Car division.

The site continues in use today as it has from its inception, with more recently established events including the Halloween Classic. Starting in 1994, Firebird began hosting the very popular Halloween Classic, which has rapidly escalated in size and popularity. Today, the Classic is one of the largest sportsman participant events in the western United States with more than 600 racers from 15 states and Canada competing at this five-day event.

Firebird also hosts one of the longest running high school drag racing programs in America. Beginning in 1976, Firebird was the second track in the nation (only one year behind Portland International Raceway in Oregon) to offer high school racing. To date, more than 22,000 students have raced and represented over 40 different high schools in both team and individual competition. Some local schools offer students the chance to earn a "letter" in the sport of drag racing.

Several of the most recognizable names in drag racing have competed at Firebird. "Big Daddy" Don Garlits, voted the #1 Driver in the NHRA's Top 50 Drivers List competed at Firebird in 1973. Another legend in drag racing history, Shirley Muldowney, once raced at Firebird, too. Other noteworthy competitors include the likes of Tom "the Mongoose" McEwen, Ed "the Ace" McCulloch, Dale Armstrong, Gary Beck, "T.V. Tommy" Ivo, and many others.

Elevation is an important factor in speed records. Sitting at an altitude of 2,700' above sea level, Firebird is home to the quickest and fastest drag racing performance in Idaho state history. Covering the measured quarter-mile, the current Firebird track records stand at 5.106 seconds of elapsed time (September 20, 2003) at 310.88 miles per hour (September 21, 2002). This performance was recorded by Chuck Haynes, Billings, Montana, with his "Volcano" jet engine-powered dragster.

The track's founder and long-time General Manager, Bill New, was a highly respected drag racing operator. After ten years in the business in 1977, he was selected by his peers to represent 18 northwest NHRA dragstrips as a national track operator's Council member for Division 6 of the NHRA. NHRA Council decisions help to steer the NHRA on future key issues and topics that shape the sport of drag racing. New joined six other track owners and operators at select meetings around the nation, each representing a different region of the country (from Division 1 thru 7).

Firebird Raceway has been aligned as a member track with the NHRA for the majority of its existence. The NHRA is the largest membership-driven racing organization in all of motorsports. For a brief span of time, Firebird switched its sanction, becoming a member of the American Hot Rod Association ("AHRA"), which started as a rival to the NHRA in 1956. General Manager, Bill New, brought Firebird into the AHRA fold, using the property and its features as they were. AHRA President, Jim Tice, courted a number of northwest dragstrips, including Firebird, and dragstrips in Salt Lake City, Seattle, and Portland, to host AHRA national events in the early

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1980s. Firebird played host to the AHRA Ignitor Nationals in 1981, featuring a full 16-car field of AA/Funny Cars, all lining up along Firebird's staging lanes, itching to race down the original dragstrip. Many of the nation's premiere racers competed at this Firebird national points race. Gordie Bonin defeated Henry Harrison in what became known as the only 16-car AA/Funny Car field ever hosted by the AHRA. Tice's death 1982 caused the AHRA to struggle, and ultimately closed up shop in 1984. Track operators of the former AHRA formed a new group, calling it the American Drag Racing Association. The sanctioning body survived two years before finally closing the doors in 1986, after which Firebird re-joined the NHRA; it has remained a NHRA member track since then.

Firebird Raceway's Interesting Features

Firebird Raceway's first timing system was built by Larry Applegate with Newtronics timing. The Newtronics equipment was the second purpose-built dragstrip timing system installed by the company just a few months after the opening of Bonneville Raceway in Salt Lake City, Utah. The system is integral to the physical system of the dragstrip, and is located at the starting line, within the barrier walls, and at the finish line (resource numbers: 29, 26, 27, 18.). The Bonneville Raceway purchased the first ever Newtronics timing system. Using the Newtronics timing system, drag racers at Firebird would know when to leave the starting line based on the activation of the timing system and what is referred to as the "Christmas tree" (resource number 31). The first racers at Firebird competed with the use of a five-amber Christmas tree. Racers would slowly roll their front tires into a stage beam, which then activated a yellow light bulb at the top of the tree. After the competitor's car staged, the chief starter (the person activating the timing system) would initiate a switch to start the tree sequence. The tree would cycle through five amber flood lamps at an interval of five-tenths of a second. The next to the last bulb on the tree was green or go. If a racer left too soon, the bottom bulb on the tree – a red light – would activate, causing a red light loss. Both racers would receive an elapsed time slip ("e.t. slip") following the race reflecting their win or loss, along with their elapsed time and miles per hour. The racers' respective elapsed times would be communicated through an on-site phone system at the track. A track official would translate these numbers to a person located end of the track commonly called the Return Road where the official would write down the details of the racers' elapsed times on the e.t. slips at the E. T. Booth and hand the slip to each racer following the race.

When Firebird Raceway opened, a unique feature that still stands was constructed: the lights and light post system. After Firebird's inaugural year in 1968, a state-of-the art track lighting system was installed, and given the hot Treasure Valley summer temperatures, it proved to be an extremely beneficial feature for both racers and fans. Drag racing at night offers a rather unique phenomenon where race cars appear to be traveling at a quicker pace under the lights. Obviously, the excitement level for fans grew measurably from a visual perspective by adding nighttime racing to the complex. Firebird became one of the first fully-lit dragstrips in the Northwest with lights spanning both the quarter-mile racing surface, as well as the shutdown area. Additionally, track lighting was installed in the pit area so racers could more easily work on their cars between

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rounds of racing. Lighting proved to be a popular and a welcome addition to the upstart Firebird racing complex.

From 1968 to 2018, Firebird Raceway has been in operation and owned by one family. Its founder, Bill New, was general manager of the facility for 46 consecutive years. He passed away on February 11, 2014. Since the inception of the raceway, the New family has successfully managed track operations. Active family members include Bill's surviving spouse Ellanor, his three sons, Scott, John and Brad, their spouses Debbie and Anna, and three grandsons Connor, Austyn and Colin.

Evaluation of Integrity and Significance of Firebird Raceway

In summary, Firebird Raceway's existence over 50 years has positively influenced nearly 3.5 million fans who have attended events. As it relates to Idaho, Firebird is the longest, continuously operated dragstrip in the Gem state and the state's only quarter-mile purpose built track. An estimated 460,000 plus participants ranging in age from 5 to 85 years have competed at Firebird dating back to 1968 when the complex first opened. The motto of the NHRA – "Dedicated to Safety" – was a primary driving force behind the specific design choices of Firebird Raceway. Firebird has worked to keep and recognize the historic features of the complex and work within their historic character and integrity to continue to offer a safe, family-oriented motorsports facility to racers and fans alike through minimal necessary upgrades like the steel and concrete barrier walls, and through the purpose-built design and layout of the entire complex.

Firebird Raceway retains its historical features, integrity, and importance to Idaho's drag racing history. The raceway proudly displays the evolution of the drag racing industry through the necessary contributing features, such as: the Compulink Timing System, the unique lighting system, the use of repairs to the strip and burn-out area, the upgraded safety concrete and steel barrier walls, and the evolution of the original motocross track to an additional pit and staging area due to the growth and popularity of the sport statewide. Firebird Raceway has statewide and regional significance in Entertainment as a sporting complex and Recreation. Traversing through a 50-year time span, the raceway has earned the respect of drivers, fans, crew members, families, sponsors, media, track staff, and a variety of motorsport enthusiasts.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON RACING TERMS

Air Foil. The same as a wing; a stabilizer, generally used to create downforce, which increases stability and tire-to-track adherence at high speeds.

Breakout. Used only in handicap racing, refers to a contestant running quicker than he or she "dialed" his or her vehicle (predicted how quick it would run); unless the opponent

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commits a more serious foul, the driver who breaks loses; if both drivers break out, then one who runs closest to his/her dial is the winner.

Burnout. Spinning the rear tires in the water to heat and clean them prior to run for better traction; a burnout precedes every run.

Christmas Tree. Also called the Tree, it is the noticeable electronic starting device between the lanes on the starting line; it displays a calibrated-light countdown for each driver.

Clutch Can. The bell-shaped housing, or bellhousing, used to encase the clutch and flywheel.

Clutch Lockup. The progression of clutch-disc engagement controlled by an air-timer management system.

Diaper. An absorbent blanket made from ballistic material, often Kevlar, that surrounds the oil pan to contain oil and parts in case of an engine explosion; required for Top Fuel, Funny Car, Top Alcohol Dragster, and Top Alcohol Funny Car.

Elapsed Time. The time it takes a vehicle to travel from the starting line to the finish line; also called e.t.

Eliminations. After qualifying, vehicles race two at a time, resulting in one winner from each pair; winners continue in tournament-style competition until one remains.

Foul Start. Indicated by a red light on the Christmas Tree when a car has left the starting line before the green light/starting signal.

Full Tree. Used in Competition, Super Stock, Stock, all forms of Bracket racing for which a handicap starting system is used to equalize competition; the three amber bulbs on the Christmas tree flash consecutively five-tenths of a second apart, followed five-tenths later by the green starting light; a perfect reaction time on a full Tree is .500.

Gas Coupes. Also known as gassers; the basic idea was to have everything be “street legal” – headlights, windshield wipers, starter motor, the engine had to be under the hood, fuel was prohibited, etc.; the aim was to perpetuate a resemblance to cars that *might* be driven on the street.

Funny Car. A car that, like the gasser or the stocker, looks like a street car but “sorta funny”; the front wheels are moved forward and the rear wheels are moved backward, and most have flip-top bodies (the rear of the body is hinged to the rear of the frame, requiring one to flip the body in order to gain access to the engine/cockpit) leading to the nickname floppers.

Interval Timers. Part of a secondary timing system that records elapsed times, primarily for the racers’ benefit, at 60, 330, 660, and 1000 feet.

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Methanol. Pure methyl alcohol produced by synthesis; used in Top Alcohol Dragsters and Top Alcohol Funny Cars.

NHRA. National Hot Rod Association; governing body which sets rules & hosts events in U.S. and Canada; founded by Wally Parks in CA, in 1951.

Nitromethane. Produced specifically as a fuel for drag racing, it is the result of a chemical reaction between nitric acid and propane; used in Top Fuel Dragsters and Top Fuel Funny Cars; a monopropellant that will ignite even in the absence of any other oxygen.

Pre-stage. To position the front wheels about seven inches behind the starting line so the small yellow lights atop the driver's side of the Christmas Tree are glowing.

Pro Tree. Used in Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock, Pro Stock Motorcycle, Pro Modified, Top Alcohol Dragster, Top Alcohol Funny Car, Super Comp, Super Gas, and Super Street, which feature heads-up competition; all three large amber lights on the Christmas Tree flash simultaneously, followed four-tenths of a second later by the green starting light.

Rail Job. A car stripped down to just bare frame rails in order to reduce weight and increase speed.

Reaction Time. The time it takes a driver to react to the green starting light on the Christmas Tree, measured in thousandths of a second; the reaction-time counter begins when the last amber light flashes on the Tree and stops when the vehicle clears the stage beam.

Slider Clutch. A multi-disc clutch designed to slip until a predetermined rpm is reached; decreases shock load to the drive wheels.

Slingshot. A dragster where the driver sits on or behind the rear axle, placing him/her behind the engine(s); popular in the 1960s.

Speed Trap. The final 66 feet to the finish line where speed is recorded.

Stage. To position the front wheels right on the starting line so the small yellow lights below the pre-stage lights are glowing; once both drivers are staged, the calibrated countdown may begin.

Stock Car. A class started in the 1960s as a way for automotive corporations to show off their experimental cars and race competitors.

Supercharger. A crank-driven air/fuel-mixture compressor, also called a blower; it increases atmospheric pressure in the engine to produce more horsepower.

Turbocharge. An exhaust-driven intake air compressor.

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Weight Transfer. Critical to traction; vehicles are set up to provide a desired weight transfer to the rear wheels; upon acceleration, the front wheels lift and the weight shifts to the rear wheels, which makes them less likely to spin.

Wheelie-bar(s). Used to prevent excessive front-wheel lift.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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<http://www.hotrod.com/articles/0911rc-drag-racing-origins/#> (accessed May 4, 2018).

Wikipedia, s.v. “Drag racing,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drag_racing (accessed May 2, 2018).

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 75 _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 43.774089° | Longitude: -116.470335° |
| 2. Latitude: 43.762773° | Longitude: -116.464592° |
| 3. Latitude: 43.762789° | Longitude: -116.468109° |
| 4. Latitude: 43.771881° | Longitude: -116.472313° |

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Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Firebird Raceway is composed of a tract of land in the West Half of Section 16, Township 5 North, Range 1 West of the Boise Meridian, Ada County, State of Idaho, more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the South 1/4 Section corner of said Section 16; thence South 89°58' West along the Section line, 653.41 feet to an iron pin on the Westerly right-of-way line of the State Highway, the REAL POINT OF BEGINNING; thence North 0°31'30" East along said right-of-way line, 56.15 feet to an iron pin; thence continuing along said right-of-way line North 20°20'30" West, 3440.12 feet to an iron pin; thence South 89°59' West 300.00 feet to an iron pin; thence South 0°01' East 1185.00 feet to an iron pin; thence South 89°59' West 214.12 feet to an iron pin; thence South 20°20'30" East 2236.32 feet to an iron pin on the Section line; thence North 89°59' East along said Section line, 931.74 feet to the REAL POINT OF BEGINNING.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Although the current Firebird property consists of more than the 75 acres discussed in this Application, (with parking areas, pit area and top end runoff expanded over the years), this Application focuses on the original 75 acres Firebird was built on. From an historical standpoint, these 75 acres are the hallowed grounds Firebird Raceway originated on; therefore, this property is the subject of this nomination.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: W. Scott New, General Manager
organization: Firebird Raceway
street & number: 1178 N. Hiltonhead Way
city or town: Eagle state: Idaho zip code: 83616
e-mail: race@firebirdonline.com
telephone: 208-938-8986
date: 15 May 2018

Additional Information Prepared By

name/title: Cassie Dishman, SHPO Technical Records; Jamee Fiore, SHPO National Register
organization: Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
street & number: 210 Main Street
city or town: Boise state: Idaho zip code: 83702
e-mail: cassie.dishman@ishs.idaho.gov; Jamee.fiore@ishs.idaho.gov
telephone: 208-488-7461
date: May 2018

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 this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photo Log ID_AdaCounty_FirebirdRaceway

Name of Property: Firebird Raceway

City or Vicinity: Eagle

County: Ada **State:** ID

Photographer: Jamee Fiore

Date Photographed: May 31, 2018

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

Photo #1	Overview from Race Control Tower (#25) facing west
Photo #2	Overview from Race Control Tower (#25) facing northwest
Photo #3	Overview from Race Control Tower (#25) facing north
Photo #4	View of east-lane of the track (#32) facing north
Photo #5	View of the "burn out" area, track (#32), and Compulink timing system (#29) facing north
Photo #6	Closeup of the "burn out" area/track (#32) facing north
Photo #7	Closeup of the "burn out" area scarring
Photo #8	View of the Race Control Tower (#25) facing east
Photo #9	View of the Firebird Safety Team (#20) facing west
Photo #10	View of the starting line, facing north
Photo #11	Closeup of the concrete barrier walls
Photo #12	View of the starting line, facing east
Photo #13	View of the Strip/Track (#32) from the starting line, facing north
Photo #14	View of the Ticketing Booths (#1) and Ticketing Office (#2) from the track, facing east
Photo #15	Overview of the bleachers from the track, facing southwest
Photo #16	Overview of the bleachers from the track, facing northwest
Photo #17	Overview of the Strip/Track (#32) facing north
Photo #18	View approaching the Finish Line, facing north
Photo #19	Closeup of the Timing Tower (#28) east side of the track
Photo #20	Closeup of the Timing Tower (#28) west side of the track
Photo #21	Perspective of the Finish Line, facing north

Photo #22	View of the Compulink Timing System (#29) facing west
Photo #23	Closeup of the Compulink Timing System (#29)
Photo #24	View of the track (#32) facing south
Photo #25	View of the Runoff (#33) facing north
Photo #26	View of the concrete and steel barrier walls (#26, 27)
Photo #27	View of the concrete and steel barrier walls (#26, 27)
Photo #28	View of the Runoff (#33) facing north
Photo #29	View of the Runoff (#33) facing south
Photo #30	View of the Lighting System (#34)
Photo #31	Closeup of the Lighting System (#34)
Photo #32	Closeup of the field-section of the Runoff (#33) facing north
Photo #33	View of Return Road (#22) facing south
Photo #34	View of the Runoff (#33) connecting to Return Road (#22) facing southeast
Photo #35	View of Return Road (#22) heading to the Valley Pit Area (#15) facing south
Photo #36	View of the Valley Pit Area (#15) facing southwest
Photo #37	View of the Valley Pit Area (#15) facing southwest
Photo #38	View of the Valley Pit Area (#15) facing southwest
Photo #39	View of the Valley Pit Area (#15) facing west
Photo #40	View of Pit Water Well (#18) facing east
Photo #41	Overview of the Valley Pit Area (#15) from the Central Pit Area, facing north
Photo #42	View of the Central Pit Area (#14) facing west
Photo #43	View of the Central Pit Area (#14) facing southwest
Photo #44	View of the Central Pit Area (#14) facing southwest
Photo #45	View of the Central Pit Area (#14) facing southeast
Photo #46	Closeup of the parking stalls in the Central Pit Area
Photo #47	View of the Firebird Safety Team (#13) facing east
Photo #48	View of the E.T. Booth (#17) facing southeast
Photo #49	View of the Central Pit Area (#14) facing northeast
Photo #50	View of pit water stalls in Central Pit Area (#14)

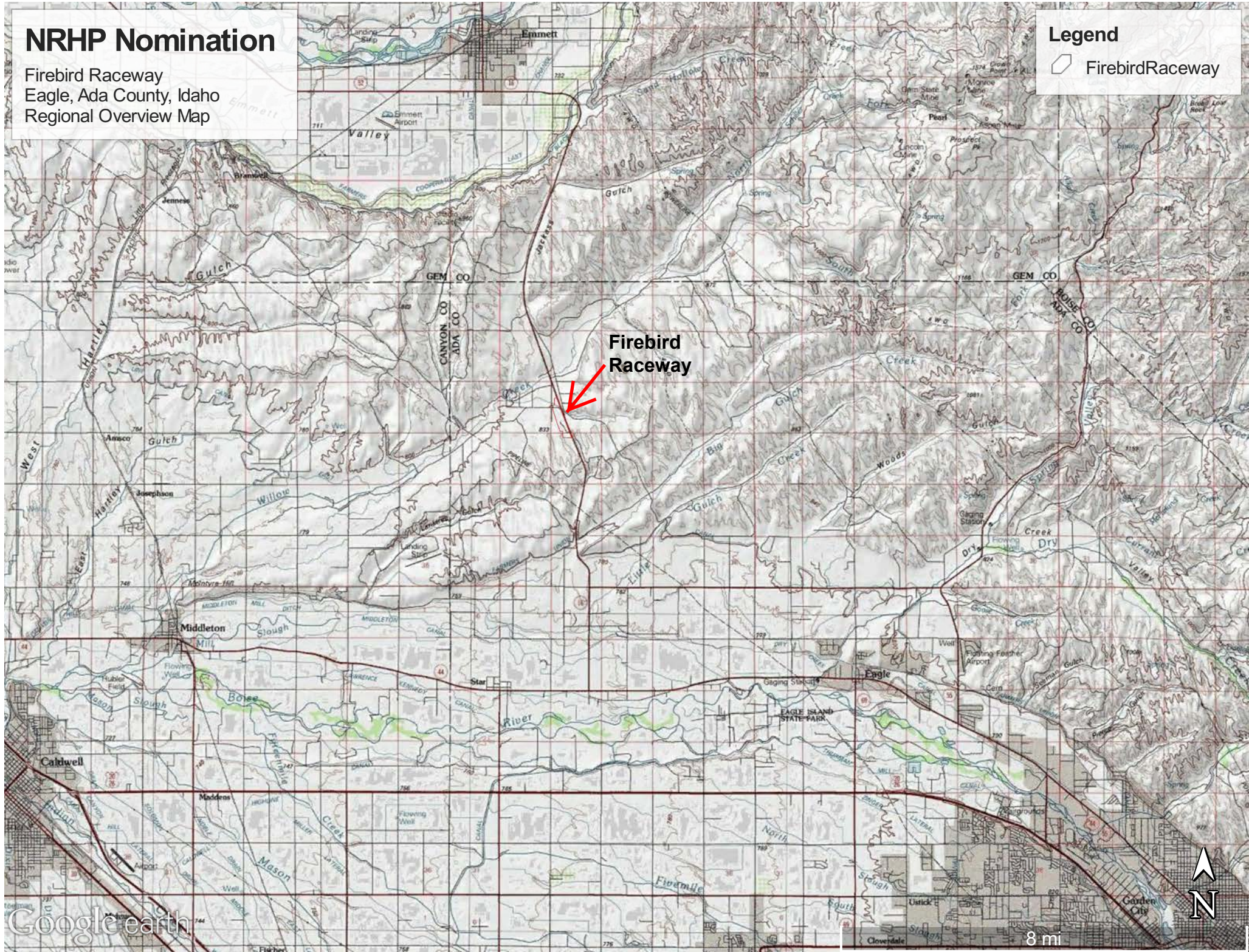
Photo #51	View of Restrooms (#13) facing southeast
Photo #52	View of Concessions (#9) facing southeast
Photo #53	View of Firebird Park and Stage (#7) facing south
Photo #54	View of Pit Control (#16) facing southeast
Photo #55	Overview of pavilion and bleachers (#5) facing northeast
Photo #56	View of Restrooms (#12) facing southwest
Photo #57	View of Concessions (#8) facing southeast
Photo #58	Overview of Pit Entrance Road (#21) and Central Pit Area (#14) facing north
Photo #59	View of the Maintenance Shop (#24) facing west
Photo #60	View of the Mountain Parking Lot (#4) facing southeast
Photo #61	View of South Parking Lot (#3) facing south
Photo #62	View of Mountain Parking Lot (#4) facing southwest
Photo #63	Overview of Starting Line, Bleachers, and Race Control Tower, facing southeast
Photo #64	View of Concessions (#10) facing southeast
Photo #65	View of Concession (#10) facing northeast
Photo #66	View of Ticketing Booths (#1) and Ticketing Office (#2) facing north
Photo #67	Closeup of Ticketing Booths (#1)
Photo #68	Closeup of the Ticketing Office (#2)
Photo #69	View of the Scales (#19) facing east
Photo #70	View of the Scales (#19) facing west
Photo #71	View of Christmas Tree (#31) facing north
Photo #72	View of Christmas Tree (#32) facing south
Photo #73	Closeup of the Compulink Timing System (#29)
Photo #74	Original Firebird Safety Team ambulance
Photo #75	Original Firebird Safety Team ambulance
Photo #76	Firebird Raceway Sign, facing north

NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Regional Overview Map

Legend

 FirebirdRaceway

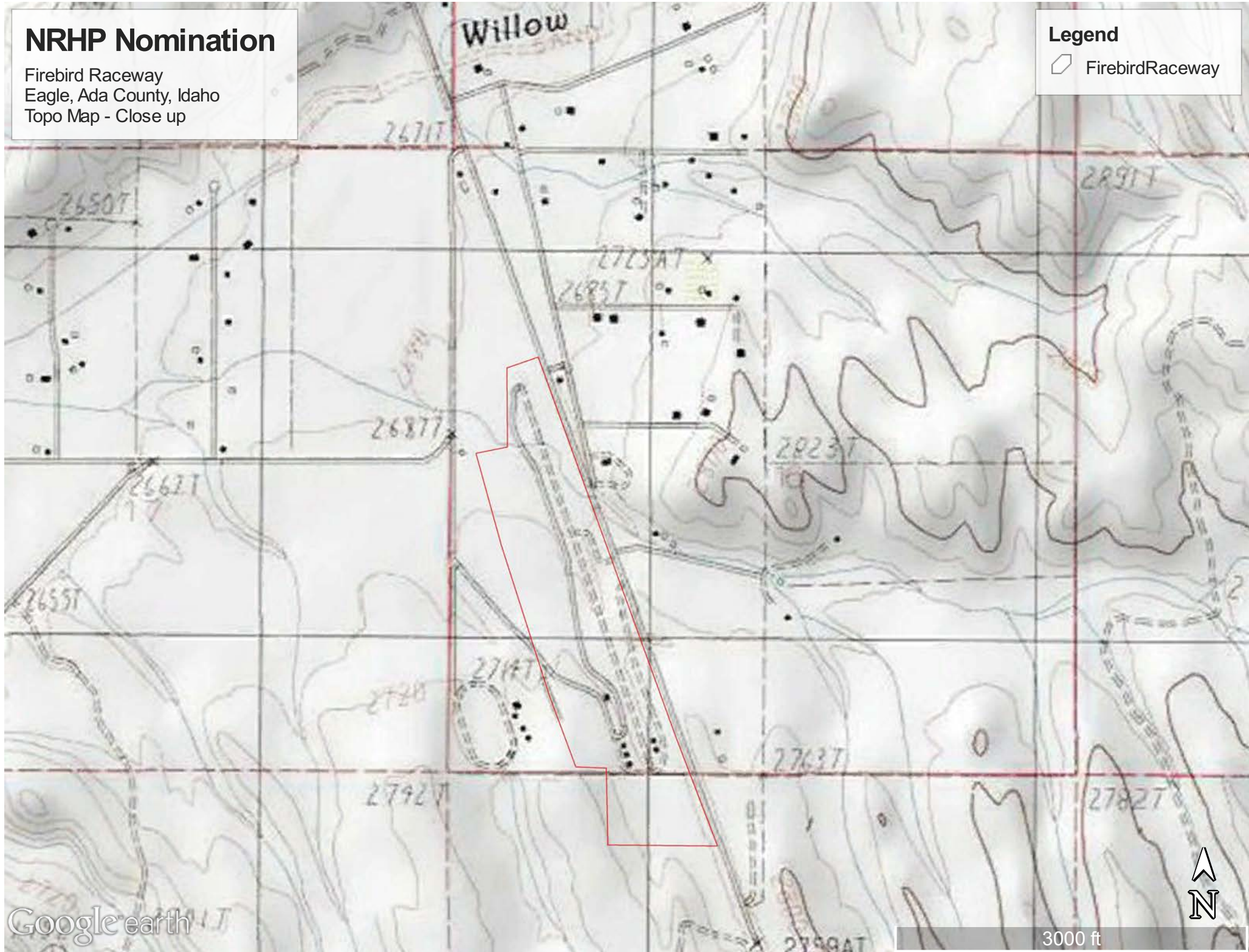


NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Topo Map - Close up

Legend

 FirebirdRaceway




NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Boundary Map

A: Lat. 43.774089° Long. -116.470335°
B: Lat. 43.762773° Long. -116.464592°
C: Lat. 43.762789° Long. -116.468109°
D: Lat. 43.771881° Long. -116.472313°

Legend

 FirebirdRaceway



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Contributing (outlined)
Noncontributing (shaded)



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Contributing



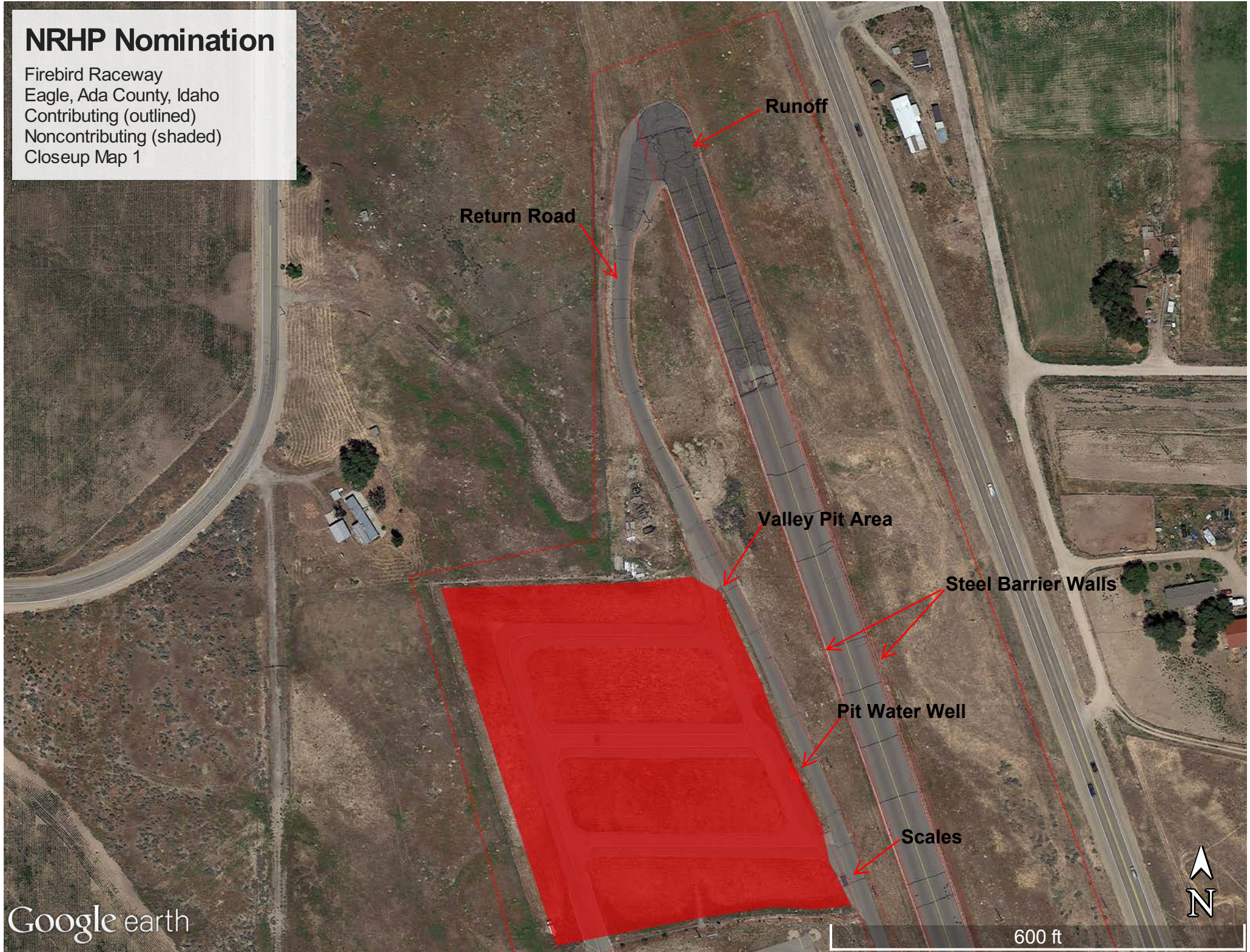
NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Noncontributing Resources



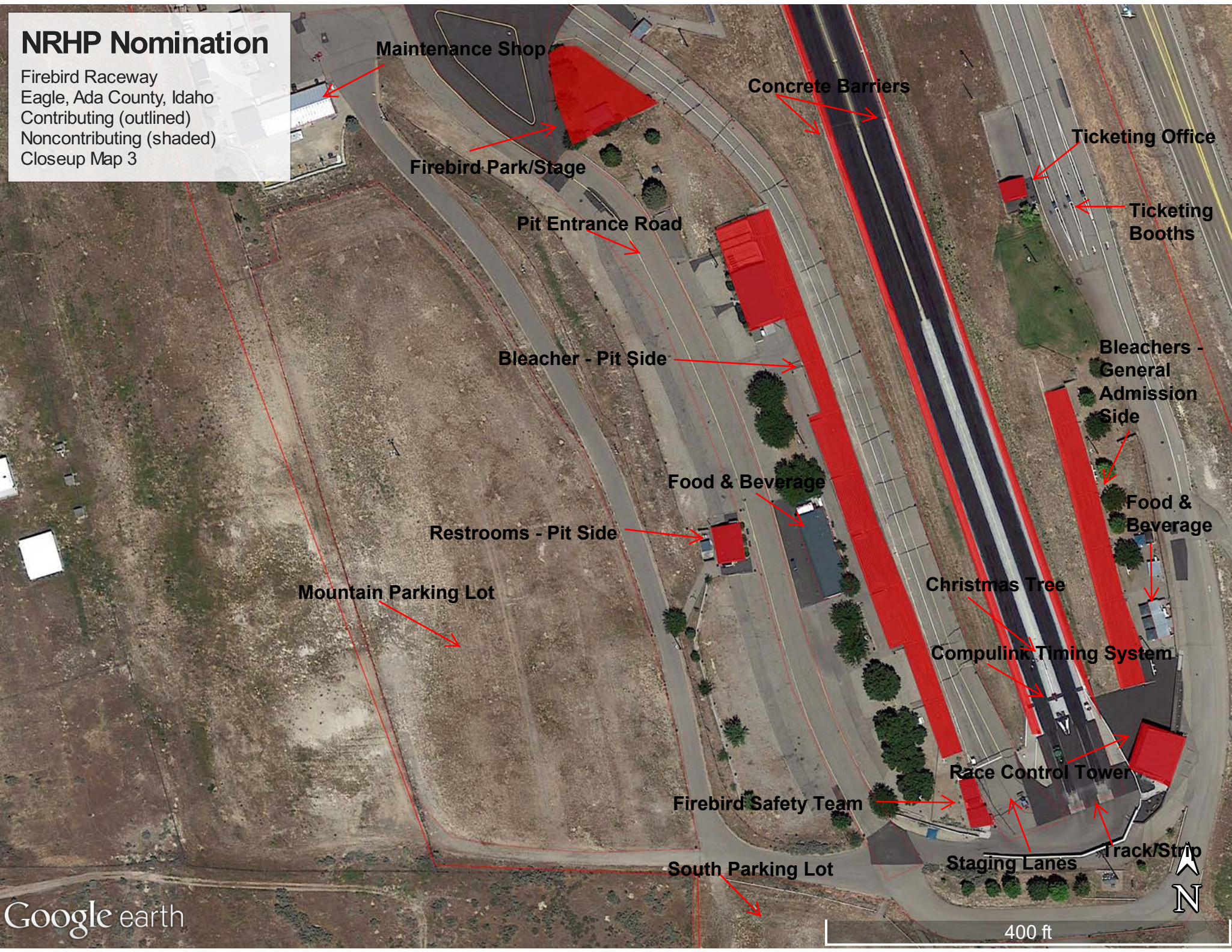
NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Contributing (outlined)
Noncontributing (shaded)
Closeup Map 1



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Contributing (outlined)
Noncontributing (shaded)
Closeup Map 3



Maintenance Shop

Firebird Park/Stage

Pit Entrance Road

Bleacher - Pit Side

Food & Beverage

Restrooms - Pit Side

Mountain Parking Lot

Firebird Safety Team

South Parking Lot

Concrete Barriers

Ticketing Office

Ticketing Booths

Bleachers -
General
Admission
Side

Food &
Beverage

Christmas Tree

Compulink Timing System

Race Control Tower

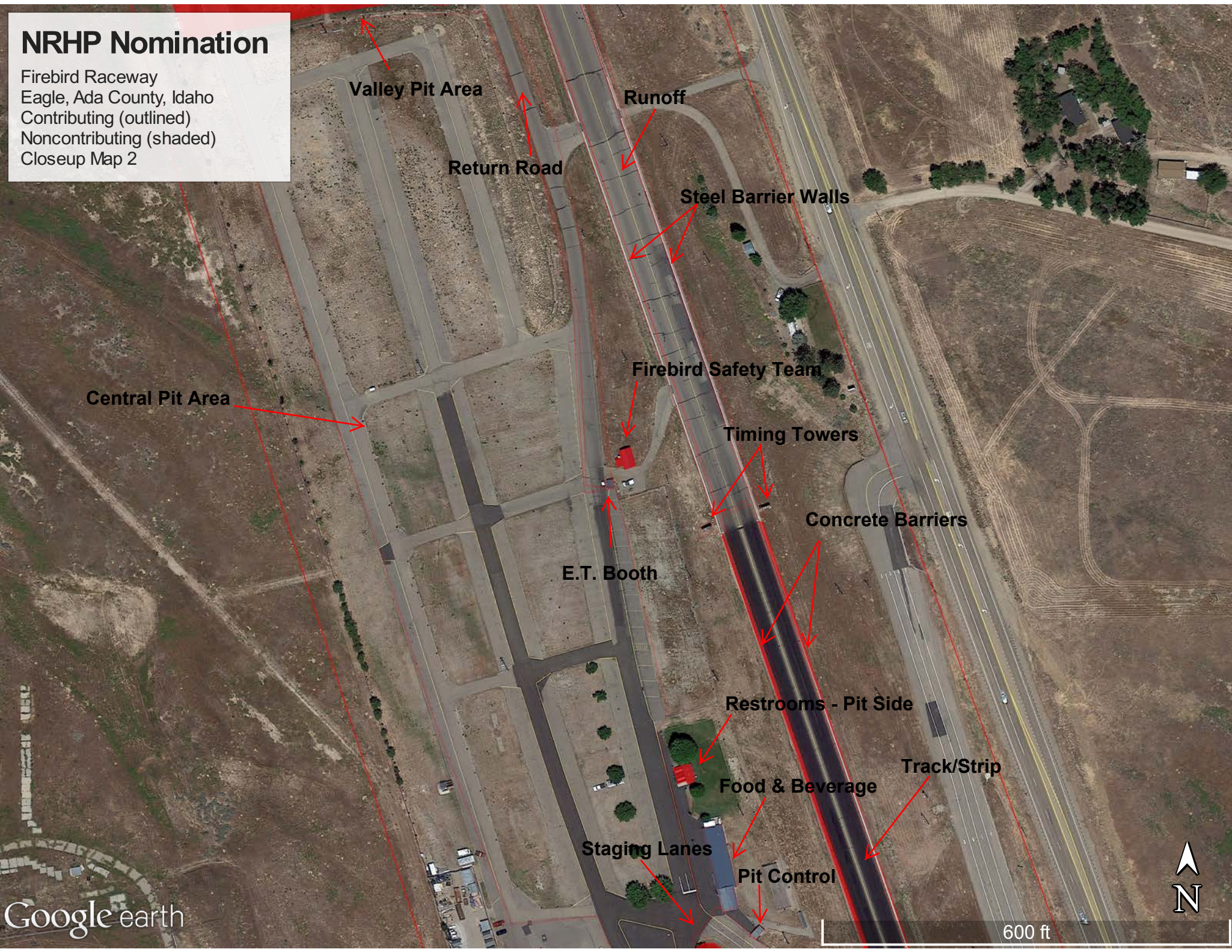
Staging Lanes

Track/Strip



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Contributing (outlined)
Noncontributing (shaded)
Closeup Map 2



Valley Pit Area

Runoff

Return Road

Steel Barrier Walls

Central Pit Area

Firebird Safety Team

Timing Towers

Concrete Barriers

E.T. Booth

Restrooms - Pit Side

Track/Strip

Food & Beverage

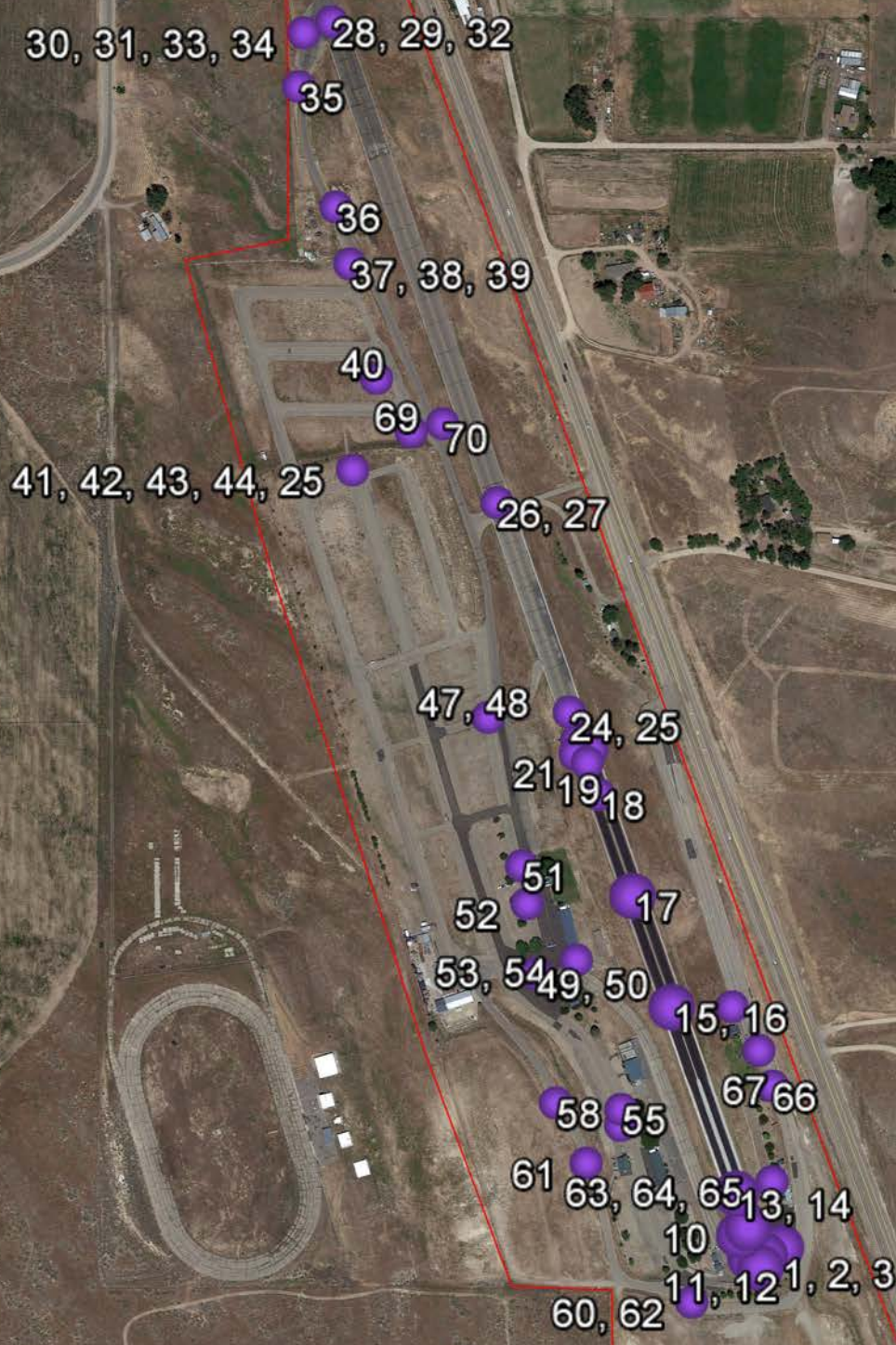
Staging Lanes

Pit Control



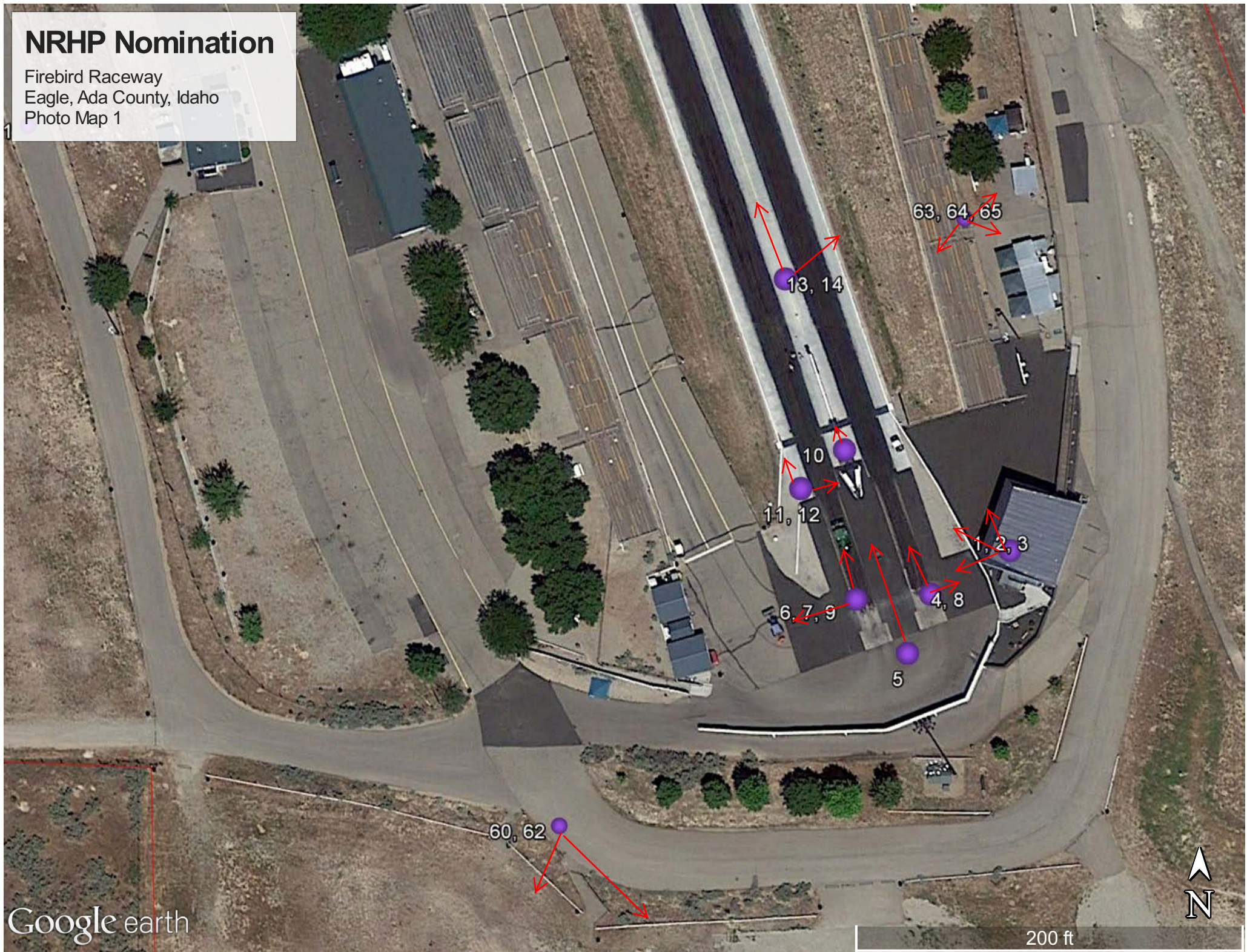
NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Overview Map



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 1



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 2

49, 50

53, 54

15, 16

68

67

66

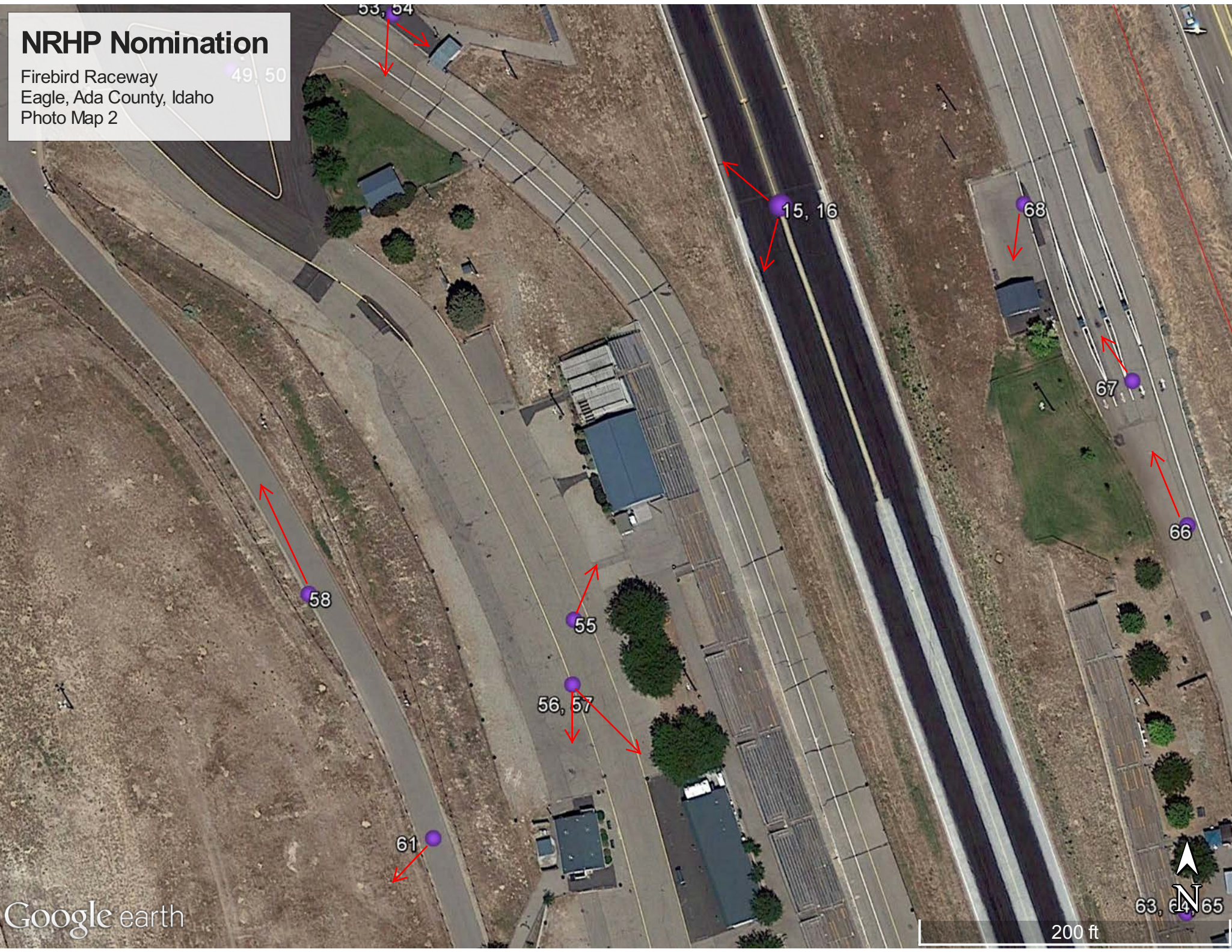
58

55

56, 57

61

63, 64, 65



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 3

51

52

53, 54

49, 50

17

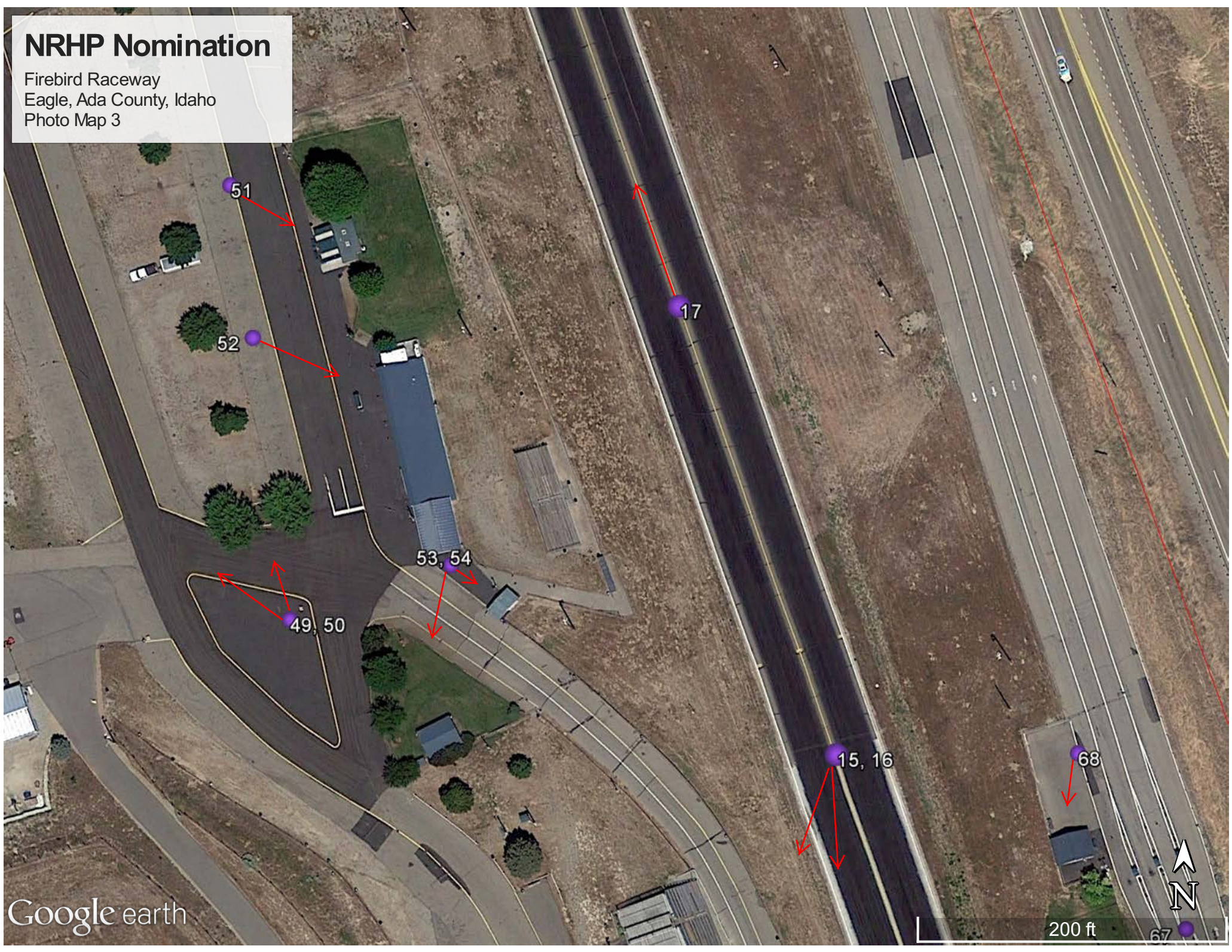
15, 16

68

67

Google earth

200 ft



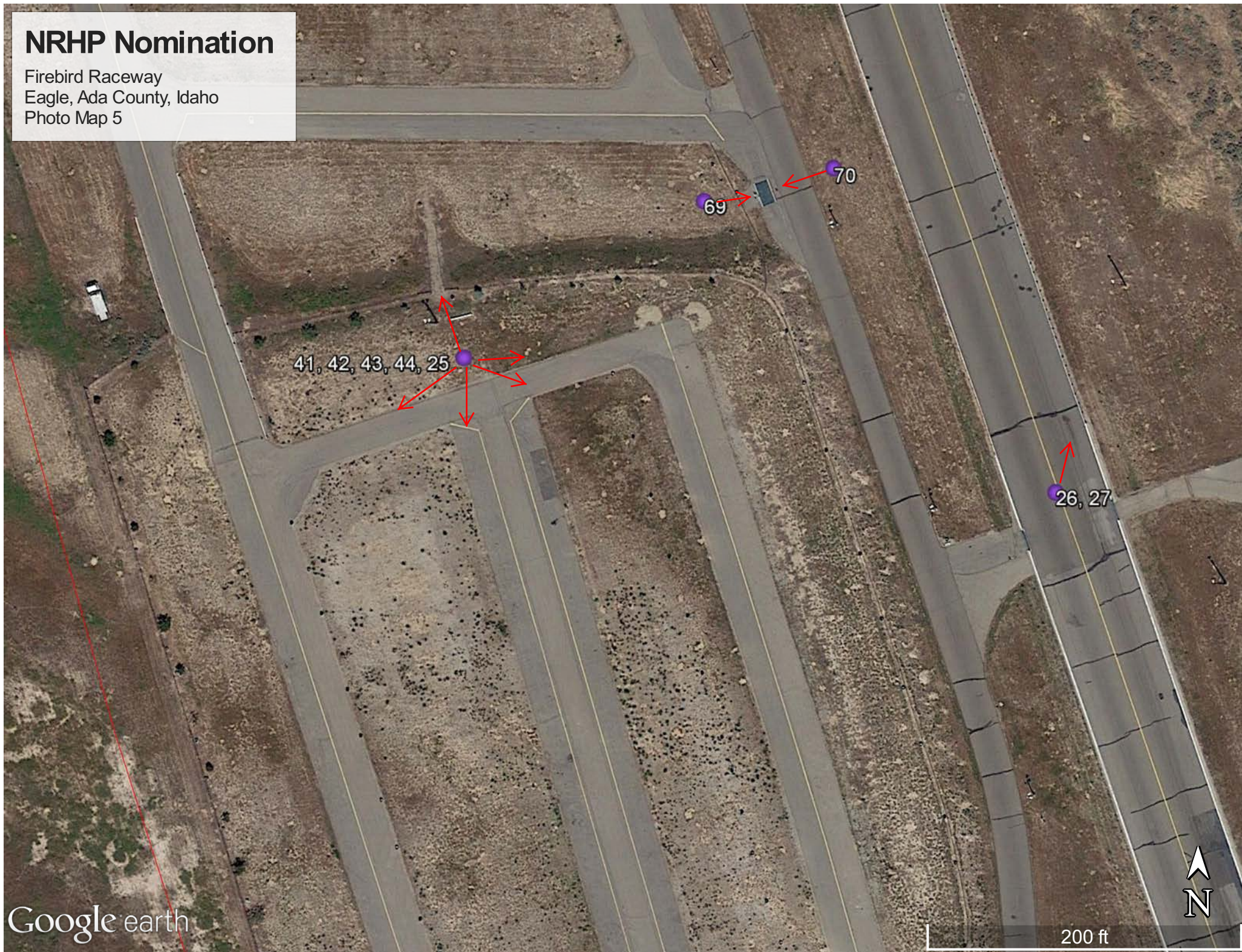
NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 4



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 5



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 6



NRHP Nomination

Firebird Raceway
Eagle, Ada County, Idaho
Photo Map 7

30, 31, 33, 34

28, 29, 32

35





Economy **TRANSMISSION**
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QUALAFAB
QUALITY PARTS
QUALITY SERVICE

Ontario **TIRE FACTORY**

DIAMOND CONTRACTORS

GROCERY OUTLET
BORG OVERLAND CALDWELL

4MC INC.
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DILOCARE

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DIAMOND
CONTRACTORS LLC

the X 100.3

BOISE
Paint & Glass

pepsi pepsi pepsi

FIREBIRD RACEWAY

FIREBIRD RACEWAY

DRAGPARTS.com

PETERSON
CHEVROLET BUICK CADILLAC

DRAGSTER

AUTO PARTS

FREE help in quit tobacco

Price Match





OTS

Wendy's

jiffy lube

Wendy's

Wendy's

Wendy's

Wendy's

Wendy's

Wendy's

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DRAGPARTS

DINO CARE

AUTO RANCH





DRAGPARTS.com

FIREBIRD RACEWAY

pepsi pepsi pepsi





FIREBIRD RACEWAY



Westside BODY WORKS





STINKER STORES
Sinclair WITH
DINOCARE
TOP TIER GASOLINE







pepsi

FIR

Finance it on Fairview

Hoosier RACING TIRE

GOOD YEAR Racing

Hampton Inn & Suites

DUTCHMAN

AXLES HOUSINGS REAR ENDS

STINKER STORES SINCE WITH DINO CARE TOP TIER GASOLINE

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FIREBIRD RACING



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WAYNE'S
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Tires LES SCHWAB



Tires LES SCHWAB



NAPA **AUTO PARTS**



NAPA AUTO PARTS

Tires LES SCHWAB

Variable message board with multiple rows of small, illegible text.

Variable message board with multiple rows of small, illegible text.

A person standing in the center of the road, wearing a dark jacket and pants, holding a clipboard or papers.

































SLOW





VALLEY
PIT
AREA
WATCH
FOR KIDS
5 MPH



VALLEY
PIT
AREA
WATCH
FOR KIDS
5 MPH



WELL HOUSE















WARNING
HAZARDOUS &
RESTRICTED
AREA
DO NOT ENTER
UNLESS AUTHORIZED

FIREBIRD RESCUE TEAM

FIRST
AID



E.T. SLIPS
HERE
5 MPH IN PITS
WATCH FOR KIDS

E.T. BOOTH

NHRA Safety Tip
CARTS & CYCLES







WOMEN

TAYLOR
Motorsports Products
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www.taylor-motorsports.com

NO
BICYCLES
OR MOTORIZED
VEHICLES
BEYOND
THIS POINT

BEVERAGE

FOOD

FOOD

WELCOME

SPORTS & GEAR

ICE
COLD
BEER

FRENCH FRIES
and
ONION RINGS
YOU'LL LOVE 'EM

PIZZAS

GREEN BENCHES

NO PARKING





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PIT CONTROL

103.7 FM
BIRGLAND
RADIO

Safety Tip
DON'T JUMP OFF

ONLY AN UNLICENSED
DRIVER IN A DRIVER
TRUCK YOUR RACE CARD
ALLOWED TO
PROCEED ON
STATE ROAD

DO NOT PASS
NO BEER
NO DRUGS
NO ALCOHOL
NO WEAPONS
NO FIREARMS
NO FIREARMS
NO FIREARMS

NO PIT
TRANSPORTATION
Please use Upper Pit Road
to Park and Access Starting Line/Lanes



S
ND



FIREBIRD RACEWAY

NO BICYCLES OR MOTORIZED VEHICLES BEYOND THIS POINT

NO BICYCLES OR MOTORIZED VEHICLES BEYOND THIS POINT



RESTROOMS

WOMEN

WOMEN

NO SMOKING



BEVERAGE

FOOD

BEVERAGE

FOOD

WELCOME

SHIRTS & CAPS

ICE COLD BEER

Packaged Ice
ICE

FRENCH FRIES
\$5.99

SOFT DRINKS
\$1.99

ICE CREAM
\$2.99

PIZZA
\$6.99

SLURP
\$1.99

WATER
\$0.50

SOFT DRINKS
\$1.99

ICE CREAM
\$2.99

PIZZA
\$6.99

SLURP
\$1.99

WATER
\$0.50





CLOSED

ONE WAY
EXIT
OPEN









FIREBIRD RACEWAY



BIG TIRES KIDD Performance Equipment Batteries + Bulbs Fisher Muffler Tires LES SCHWAB TRANSMISSION QUALAFAB TIRE FACTORY

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FREE help to quit tobacco





FOOD & BEVERAGE

FOOD & BEVERAGE



FOOD & BEVERAGE



FOOD & BEVERAGE










FIREBIRD RACEWAY
Member Since
Track Type: Concrete
1970 1971
1972 1973
1974 1975
1976 1977
1978 1979
1980 1981
1982 1983
1984 1985
1986 1987
1988 1989
1990 1991
1992 1993
1994 1995
1996 1997
1998 1999
2000 2001
2002 2003
2004 2005
2006 2007
2008 2009
2010 2011
2012 2013
2014 2015
2016 2017
2018 2019
2020 2021
2022 2023
2024 2025

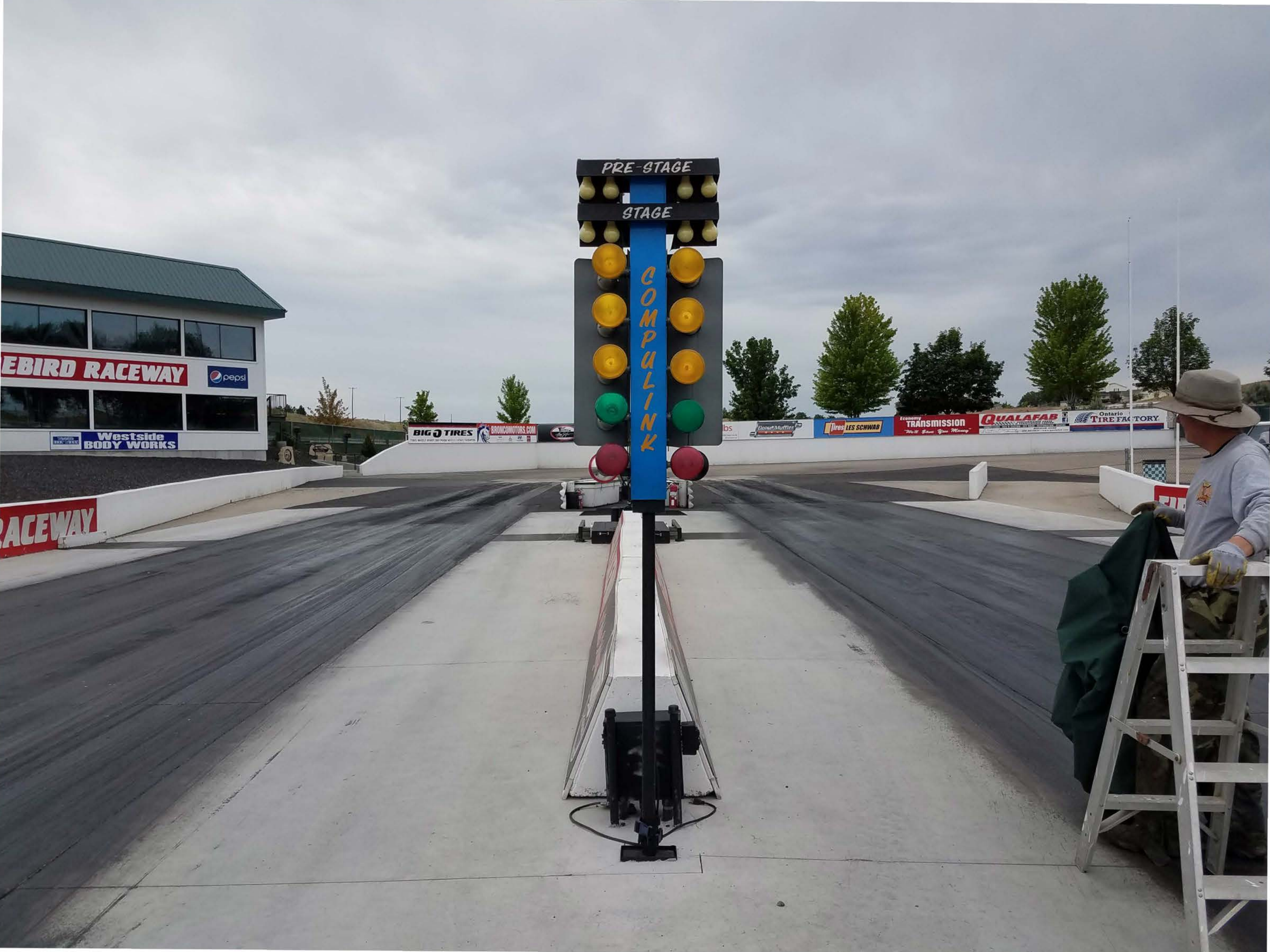
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PRE-STAGE

STAGE

COMPU LINK

WEBIRD RACEWAY



Westside BODY WORKS

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RACEWAY

PIE





FIREBIRD SAFETY TEAM

FIREBIRD
RACEWAY

Chevrolet Caprice
LA BRUNO



**FIREBIRD
RACEWAY**



**38TH OLDIES DRAGS
THIS SAT & SUN**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Firebird Raceway

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: IDAHO, Ada

Date Received: 11/8/2018 Date of Pending List: 11/16/2018 Date of 16th Day: 12/3/2018 Date of 45th Day: 12/24/2018 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003243

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 12/24/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Automatic listing due to lapse in appropriations.

The Firebird Raceway is of statewide significance under National Register Criterion A (Entertainment/Recreation). Established in 1968, the quarter-mile dragway utilized its isolated site and bowl-shaped natural setting to create a highly popular recreational venue. The only full quarter-mile, purpose-built drag racing track extant in the state, Firebird became a significant stop on both national NHRA tours and regional competitions. Alterations necessary to maintain safety and modern technology have not affected the site's basic historic configuration and character-defining aspects as a rural, modest operation racetrack. The track's unique status, rare level of integrity, and statewide significance meet the requirements for Criteria Consideration G.

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept NR Criterion A

Reviewer Paul Lusignan Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229 Date 12/24/2018

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

ADA COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL

200 W. Front Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
P. (208) 287-7900
F. (208) 287-7909

Dave Davies, Chair
Kathryn Almberg
Forrest Hunter
Sarah Schafer

Ted Vanegas, Vice-Chair
Sharon Fisher
Robert Martinez



September 7, 2018

Jamee Fiore
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
210 Main Street
Boise, ID 83702



RE: FIREBIRD RACEWAY NOMINATION

Dear Ms. Fiore,

The Ada County Historic Preservation Council (ACHPC) at their September 4, 2018 meeting reviewed the materials for the Firebird Raceway nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The ACHPC concurs and lends their support to the Eagle Historic Preservation Commission's nomination. We find that the Firebird Raceway represents a slice of entertainment history in Ada County.

Please let us know if we can of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brent Danielson, AICP
Staff Liaison to Ada County Historic Preservation Council
Associate Planner
Ada County Development Services



IDAHO STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



November 7, 2018

Keeper of the National Register
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho

Janet Gallimore
Executive Director
State Historic
Preservation Officer

Administration:
2205 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2682
Fax: 208.334.2774

Idaho State Museum:
610 Julia Davis Dr.
Boise, Idaho 83702
208.334.2120

**Idaho State Archives
and State Records
Center:**
2205 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2620

**State Historic
Preservation Office:**
210 Main St.
Boise, Idaho 83702
208.334.3861

**Old Idaho Penitentiary
and Historic Sites:**
2445 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2844

HISTORY.IDAHO.GOV

**RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for
Firebird Raceway, Eagle, Ada County, Idaho**

Dear Keeper,

The enclosed materials are being submitted for the following nominated property:

***Firebird Raceway
Eagle Ada County, Idaho***

- Original signed front page of the NRHP nomination form
- CD containing true and correct PDF copy of the nomination – Disk 1
- CD containing photos in TIFF format (76 photos) – Disk 2
- Letters of Support from City/Owner – ~~Disk 1~~
- Kml google earth file of property boundary – Disk 1

Additional Comments:

In addition to the maps, the SHPO has created a Kml file that marks the boundary of the property. If there are any problems with the records, please don't hesitate to contact us at: matt.halitsky@ishs.idaho.gov or (208) 488-7468.

Sincerely,

Jamee Fiore
National Register Coordinator