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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAR 11 1994

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 6A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Ocate Creek Crossing and the Santa Fe Trail (Mora County Trail Segments)

other names/site number NPS Master Plan #166

### 2. Location

street & number 1-3/4 mi. n. of jct. SR 120 and the road to Mora Ranch [N/A] not for publication

city or town Ocate [X] vicinity

state New Mexico code NM county Mora code 033 zip code 87734

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

[Signature] SIPPO 2-23-94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Historic Preservation Division State of New Mexico  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- removed from the  
National Register
- other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper Date  
Beth Boland 1/21/94

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ocate Creek Crossing...  
Name of Property

Mora/NM  
County/State

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail  
Multiple Property Submission

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
9	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
9	2	Total

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

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

LANDSCAPE/unoccupied land

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

roof N/A

other N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Ocate Creek Crossing...  
Name of Property

Mora/NM  
County/State

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail  
Multiple Property Submission

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographic References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

Commerce \_\_\_\_\_

#### Periods of Significance

1822 - c. 1870 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Significant Dates

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

#### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

#### Architect/Builder

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

National Park Service Regional Office--  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Ocate Creek Crossing...  
Name of Property

Mora/NM  
County/State

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail  
Multiple Property Submission

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 90 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A. Zone 13 Easting 510320 Northing 4000600

B. Zone 13 Easting 510640 Northing 4000560

C. Zone 13 Easting 510660 Northing 4000520

D. Zone 13 Easting 510270 Northing 4000480

[X] See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet  
organization The URBANA Group date May 1993  
street & number 202 South Broadway, Suite 206, P.O. Box 1028 telephone (217) 344-7526  
city or town Urbana state IL zip code 61801-9998

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

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**MAR 11 1994**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

**Ocate Creek Crossing and the Santa Fe Trail (Mora County Trail Segments); Mora County, NM;  
Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880**  
Section number 7

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**Narrative Description**

The Ocate Creek Crossing site is located 1-3/4 miles north of New Mexico Highway 120 and 14.5 miles west of Wagon Mound. The site contains nine contributing resources: five rutted Trail segments and four creek crossings. A light-duty road and an unimproved dirt road disrupt the continuity of one of the rutted Trail segments and thus are identified as two noncontributing resources.

The Trail ruts are oriented in an east-west direction across central and eastern portions of the site and in a northeast-southwest direction across western portions of the site. The Trail segments contained within this site were described as "exceptional" and materially reflected the historic scene since this "... heavily traveled section of the Trail has not changed since the wagons last used it."<sup>1</sup> Since the physical characteristics of land, natural features, and vegetation play a dominant role in the assessment of the site's integrity, the seven qualities of integrity called for in the National Register criteria are applied to the site in a special way similar to their application to rural landscapes.<sup>2</sup>

One rutted Trail segment enters the site to the east while another emerges 310 meters south and 290 meters west of the roadway identified on the accompanying U.S.G.S. map. These two Trail segments (525 meters and 860 meters respectively) intersect to form one rutted segment which continues west for 1,200 meters until the Trail begins to diverge to form four sets of Trail ruts. Two of these rutted Trail segments continue west to the north and south of a rock ledge. The two rutted Trail segments, approximately 300 meters in length, reunite on the west side of the creek, west of the northernmost of the four crossings. Six distinct swales are visible on the west side of Ocate Creek merging into one Trail segment which headed west at 277 degrees east of north before turning southwest and continuing at 195 degrees east of north to exit the site to the southwest--a distance of 600 meters. Another two rutted Trail segments continue southwest for 390 meters and 310 meters respectively, crossing the creek channel (at the two eastern/southeastern crossings), and reemerging 200 meters south of the creek bank. These two segments rejoin before exiting the site. A faint Trail segment also crossed Ocate Creek to the west of a possible campsite but is no longer visible, to the south of this creek crossing.

The Ocate Creek channel is approximately thirty meters wide. Flow in the channel varies depending on environmental conditions. Five separate swales descend to the northern bank of the creek and reemerge south and west of Ocate Creek. Historically, the creek had a firm bottom, facilitating ease of crossing; wagons could cross the channel at several crossing points for about one-quarter mile. The creek's current accumulation of sand is a result of the construction of a dam downstream from the crossing sites, slowing the flow of Ocate Creek. A possible campsite exists south and east of the creek crossings on a rock ledge. The chance of subsurface remains of this campsite is unlikely since sandstone was visible at the surface.

Apart from two roadways in the western portion of the site, no man-made intrusions exist within this site to disturb the rutted segments. Man-made features such as the location of roadways and an artificial dam to

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the east of the site were factors considered in the designation of boundaries. Despite erosion of the stream bank, the site remains largely unmodified and still retains its environmental integrity. The environmental context of the site is good, and the continuing presence of the ruts provides integrity of location and setting. The crossing retains visual integrity due to the screening effects of vegetation, and the ruts' covering of grass and natural plants retains its historic visual context, thereby providing a sense of feeling and association with the related historic contexts.

Approximately one hundred meters to the east of this site is the Calhoun Cemetery. The Calhoun family operated a stage station in this vicinity in the late 1870s. In the event that a historic archaeology investigation is made in this area and significant historic features are found, the boundaries and period of significance of this nomination could be increased.

**Endnotes**

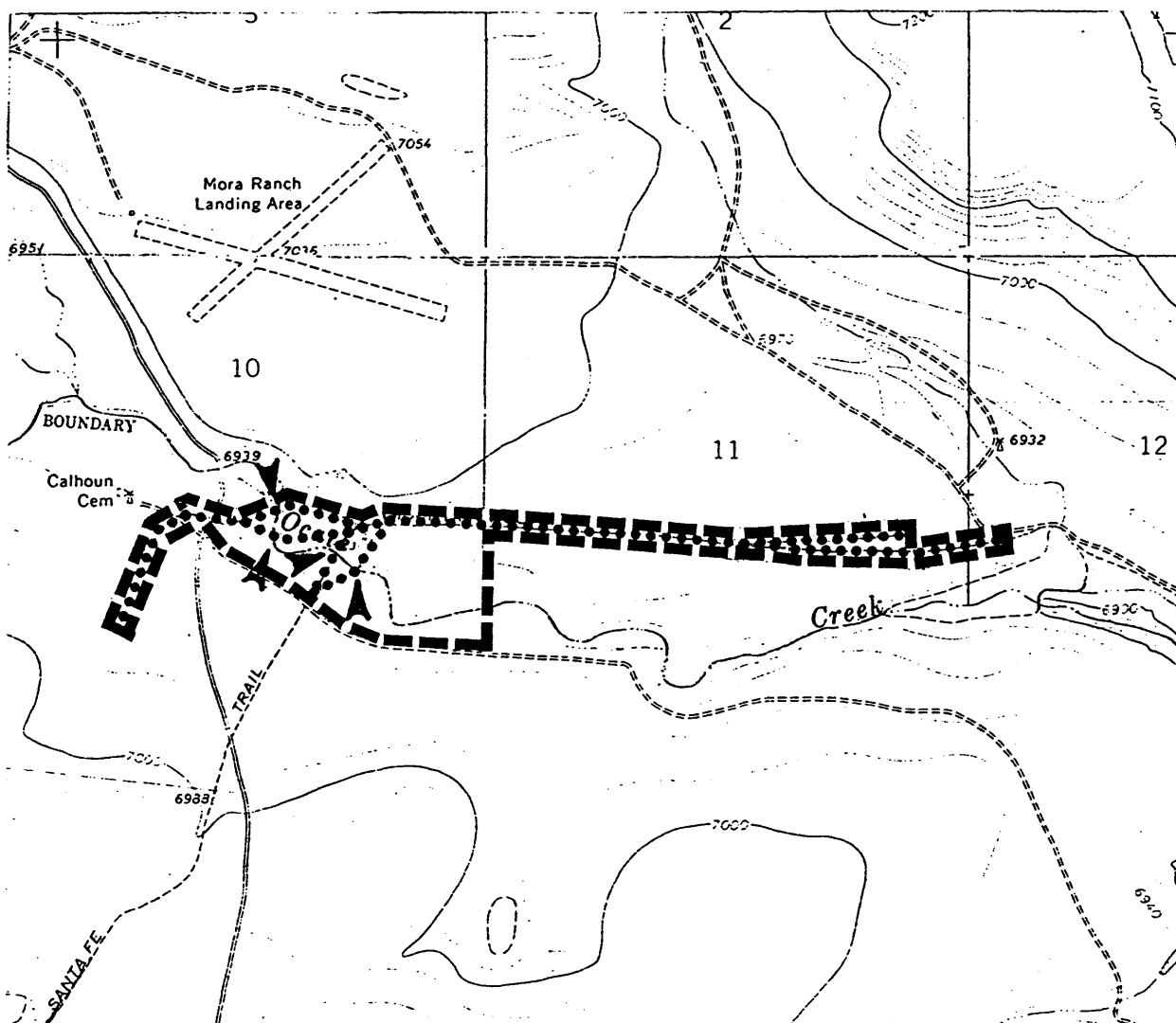
1. William E. Brown, The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1990), p. 202.
2. United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), pp. 22-23.

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Sketch Map



KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- ..... TRAIL SEGMENTS
- ▲ CROSSINGS

SCALE

0 200 METERS



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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Ocate Creek Crossing and the Santa Fe Trail (Mora County Trail Segments) site is eligible to the National Register under Criterion A as a reflection of historically-significant Trail activity. The creek crossings and the ruts are eligible within the areas of commerce and transportation. Ocate Creek Crossing falls within the Ancillary Historic Properties (subtype: Natural Sites) property type while the Trail ruts fall within the Historic Trail property type, both of which are detailed in Section F of the Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880 Multiple Property Documentation form. The site's period of significance begins with the initiation of wagon transport over the Santa Fe Trail in 1822 and ends with the arrival of the railroad and the declining use of the Trail c. 1870. This site demonstrates, and is associated with, historically-significant Trail activity outlined in the historic contexts: International Trade on the Mexican Road, 1821-1846; The Mexican War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1848; Expanding National Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1848-1865; The Effects of the Civil War on the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; and The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880.

The Ocate Creek Crossing site composes part of the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail. The Mountain Route traversed 338 miles from its departure from the Cimarron Route at Cimarron, Kansas to its reunification with the Cimarron Route at La Junta (Watrous), New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> During the first twenty-five years of the Trail's existence, Cimarron Route proved more popular than the Mountain Route since it was nearly fifty miles shorter and presented level terrain allowing ease of wagon movement. The lack of water and the possibility of American Indian confrontation were the disadvantages faced by travelers along the Cimarron Route. The bulk of Trail traffic shifted from the Cimarron Route to the Mountain Route in 1846 with the widening of formerly narrow sections of the Mountain Route allowing greater ease of wagon movement and a drought in the southwest that same year reducing water supplies along the Cimarron Route even further.

The Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail crossed several rivers west of the Canadian River, however, the Ocate Creek Crossing is distinct in several ways. The crossing of Ocate Creek at this site represents a response by Trail travelers to the surrounding terrain and to the availability of water. Lieutenant Abert, who composed part of the Army of the West who traversed this site in 1846, recalled the course of the Trail and the location of Ocate Creek Crossing from Apache Rock, a mesa located to the northeast of the site:

When we looked to our right hand, we saw another horizontal plain yet higher than the one we were travelling on, and covered also with a bed of volcanic rock about five feet in thickness. Keeping close to the foot of this highest "mesa," we reached the "Ocate;" as it is cañoned, that is, is enclosed with high rocky walls, we were forced to go two miles up stream in order to reach the crossing.<sup>2</sup>



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The Army of the West which crossed this portion of the Trail in 1846 camped just north of the Ocate Creek Crossing. John T. Hughes, a Missouri Volunteer, described the camp established there by the Army of the West on August 11, 1846:

A march of twenty miles, mostly through the gorges of the mountains, over a rocky, flinty road, brought us to the Ocate, a limpid stream of fresh water, where we halted for the night. The nearest timber was two miles and a half distant. Of an evening when the army would halt for the purpose of selecting a camp ground, and the order was given to dismount, a busy scene ensued. Every man was his own servant. Some were scrambling after the scattering sticks of wood, or dry brush; some busy in pitching their tents and arranging them in order; some tethering the animals; and some bringing water for cooking purposes. At length, "all is set." The coffee is made, the meat broiled, and the bread prepared . . . when the several messes, gathering round their respective fires, seated upon the ground . . . dispatch in "double-quick time," their scanty fare. Supper over, the men next see after their horses, picket them on fresh grass, return to camp, spread their blankets upon the earth, wrap up in them, and unceremoniously fall asleep--leaving the spies and guard to take care of the enemy.<sup>3</sup>

The Army of the West was instrumental in clearing a wagon route across the Mountain Route of the Trail making it more accessible to wagons and, thereby, increasing Trail traffic on this portion of the route. Field investigation also suggested the existence of a camp site to the south of the crossing. Trail travelers often completed the river crossing on the evening prior to the day of their departure in order to ensure steady progress of the wagon train.

Several notable Trail travelers traversed this site including Susan Shelby Magoffin, whose individual accounts of travel over the Santa Fe Trail have become widely known. Magoffin and her husband, Samuel, were in the first wagon train to cross this portion of the Mountain Route after the passage of the Army of the West in 1846. Magoffin recalled setting up camp at Ocate Creek on Sunday, August 23, 1846--seventeen days into their journey from Independence to Santa Fe.<sup>4</sup>

From the mid 1840s, the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail acquired much of the Trail traffic. Prior to this time, Trail travel over this portion of the route was sporadic. The overland stagecoach and mail routes adopted the Mountain Route of the Trail for security purposes and due to a more reliable water supply. Fort Union, established in 1851 and located south of Ocate Creek Crossing along the Santa Fe Trail, aided in the generation of traffic, particularly military traffic, over the Trail prior to and during the Civil War. Fort Union was perceived as the key to Confederate control of New Mexico.<sup>5</sup> The military significance of this portion of the Mountain Route is detailed further in Section E of the Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880 Multiple Property Documentation form. The fort was also a base from which soldiers operated in order to patrol and protect portion of the Mountain Route of the Trail from Native American and other confrontation.

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The site retains a high degree of integrity evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics of the crossing and ruts that existed during the property's historic period of significance. A 1963 survey of Trail properties identified that the "Trail ruts from the tip of Apache Hill to Ocate Crossing . . . [were] exceptional."<sup>6</sup> This site was an important overnight campsite for Trail travelers on the Mountain Route while the Trail ruts contained therein serve as tangible physical remnants of historically-significant Trail activity.

Endnotes

1. United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, Santa Fe National Historic Trail: Comprehensive Management and Use Plan (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 15.
2. James W. Abert, Report of Lt. J. W. Abert on His Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-47, 30 Cong., 1 sess., House Exec. Doc. No. 31 (Washington D.C., 1848), p. 27; William E. Brown, The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1962 Historic Sites Survey (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1990), p. 200.
3. John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition (Cincinnati: n.p., 1848), p. 69; Brown, pp. 201-202.
4. Stella M. Drumm, ed., Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926 and 1962; reprint ed., Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 88-89.
5. Leo E. Oliva, Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 56.
6. Brown, p. 202.

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**Bibliography**

- Abert, James W. Report of Lt. J. W. Abert on His Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-47, 30 Cong., 1 sess., House Exec. Doc. No. 31. Washington, D.C., 1848.
- Brown, William E. The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1990.
- Drumm, Stella M., ed. Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926 and 1962; reprint ed., Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.
- Hughes, John T. Doniphan's Expedition. Cincinnati: n.p., 1848.
- Oliva, Leo E. Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.
- United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service. National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990.
- United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service. Santa Fe National Historic Trail: Comprehensive Management and Use Plan. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990.

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**UTM References**

Point	Zone	Easting	Northing
E.	13	508930	4000580
F.	13	508930	4000180
G.	13	508490	4000220
H.	13	507900	4000600
I.	13	507740	4000300
J.	13	507700	4000320
K.	13	507860	4000660
L.	13	508280	4000680

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Commencing at a point fifteen meters south of the intersection of the rutted Trail segment and the section line between Sections 10 and 11 on the accompanying Mora Ranch U.S.G.S. map, proceed due south for 400 meters crossing Ocate Creek to intersect the 6,920-foot contour on the south side of the creek. Follow the 6,920-foot contour west and northwest for 960 meters until the boundary is within fifteen meters of the southern edge of the ruts. Proceed south and southwest fifteen meters parallel to the southern edge of the ruts for 565 meters crossing two roadways and a fence. Turn west-northwest and continue the boundary for thirty meters. Proceed northeast and east at fifteen meters parallel to the ruts for 2,655 meters before turning south, perpendicular to the rutted segment, for thirty meters. Turn west and continue the boundary for 525 meters maintaining a distance of fifteen meters from the rutted segment. Turn east and continue the boundary for 860 meters at a distance of fifteen meters from the rutted segment. Turn south, perpendicular to the rutted segment, and continue the boundary for thirty meters. Proceed southwest and west for 1,620 meters at a distance of fifteen meters from the rutted Trail segment and return to the point of origin.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of this site enclose only the site's historic resources and their immediate environs. Much of the site boundary employed the use of a thirty-meter Trail corridor as recommended in National Register Bulletin #30, p. 27. A portion of the southern boundary followed the 6,920-foot contour. The use of the section line as a boundary was based on the location of the site's historic resources.

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**Form Prepared by:**

**For The URBANA Group:**

Joseph Gallagher/Cultural Geographer  
Writer

Archaeological Survey, University of Missouri-St. Louis  
Colleen Hamilton and Brad Mueller/Historic Archaeologists  
Field Work