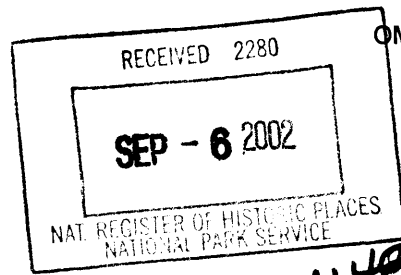


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1148

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct

other names/site number CDOT No. K-16-S; 5FN1693

2. Location

street & number Colorado Highway 120 at milepost 0.17 [N/A] not for publication

city or town Florence [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Fremont code 043 zip code _____

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 [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gregorio Cortezuelin State Historic Preservation Officer August 21, 2002
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society
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: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- [] 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.

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
--------------	-----------------	--

0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

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

Highway Bridges in Colorado

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Concrete deck girder, cantilevered

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls
roof
other Concrete
Asphalt

Narrative Description

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

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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

Engineering

Periods of Significance

1931-1952

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Colorado Department of Highways

Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Co

Mountain States Construction Company

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Colorado Dept. of Transportation

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Name of Property

Fremont County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 493750 4248440
Zone Easting Northing

2. _____
Zone Easting Northing

3. _____
Zone Easting Northing

4. _____
Zone Easting Northing

[] 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 Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and Clay Fraser, principal

organization Colorado Historical Society and Fraser Design date May 21, 2002

street & number 1300 Broadway telephone 303-866-4681

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80203

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 Colorado Department of Transportation

street & number 4201 E. Arkansas Avenue telephone _____

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80222

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.*)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

Location: Colorado Highway 120 at milepost 0.17, 1.5 miles east of Florence

Setting: Over Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

Structure length: 262 feet
Structure width: 27.50 feet
Roadway width: 24 feet

Main span number: 7
Main span length: 46 feet

Superstructure: Concrete deck girder, cantilevered
Substructure: Concrete abutments, wingwalls and spill-through piers
Floor/decking: Concrete deck with asphalt overlay
Other features: Colorado Highway Department standard slotted concrete guardrails
Corbeled and bush-hammered spandrels
Colorado Highway Department bulkhead plates

Erected: 1931
Designer: Colorado Department of Highways
Fabricator: Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Company
Contractor: Mountain States Construction Company

Alterations: Substructure repaired in 1983

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 8 Page 2

SIGNIFICANCE

The 1931 Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct on Colorado Highway 120, 1.5 miles east of Florence, meets the registration requirements under Criterion A in the area of Transportation and under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as set forth in the *Highway Bridges in Colorado*, Multiple Property Documentation Form. The period of significance begins in 1931 with the completion of the viaduct and extends through its historic use to 1952, a date fifty-years-of-age in keeping with National Register criteria.

One of the first primary roads designated by the Highway Commission in 1910 extended along the Arkansas River Valley in southeastern Colorado. Beginning at Cañon City, State Primary Road No. 5 followed the Arkansas River to Pueblo and on eastward through the farming communities of Boone, Manzanola, and Rocky Ford to La Junta, where it joined with Primary Road No.6 and ran to the Kansas state line. Extending some 65 miles, Primary Road No. 5 followed one of the oldest overland routes through Colorado. It soon became part of the National Old Trails Highway, one of several transcontinental auto routes that ran east-west through the state.

In 1922, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads approved Colorado's first federal aid highway system. Of the 48,000 miles of roads in the state, some 3,360 were declared as state highways, under the aegis of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). Under the new system, State Primary Road No. 5/6 was redesignated as State Highway 6. Three years later, State Highway 6 was incorporated into US Highway 50, which ran from Holly on the eastern edge of the state to Grand Junction on the west. Whether as State Primary Road No. 5 or in its subsequent iterations, this route across eastern Colorado formed an important interstate link for Pueblo and the Arkansas River Valley. The Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct provided a major grade separation on US 50, built as the route was being upgraded from a gravel road to a paved highway.

During the 1910s and 1920s, Fremont County and the state made incremental improvements to the route, grading the roadway and building drainage structures. For administrative purposes, CHD divided the work into relatively short segments and let contracts under the funding umbrella of Federal Aid Project 271. In July 1930, CHD reported, "Plans are now being drafted by the Highway department for an overhead crossing west of Portland. This will eliminate a dangerous crossing on the main line of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad." Early in 1931, CHD awarded the contract for FAP 271-F to the Mountain States Construction Company for \$57,583. Mountain States used steel reinforcing fabricated by the Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Company to build the viaduct, completing it in August. Since then the viaduct has functioned in place in essentially unaltered condition.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 9 Page 3

Engineering

This multiple span structure is technologically important as an intact early example of highway bridge design by CHD. During the 1920s, CHD designed and built several concrete girder structures that employed cantilevering to achieve long span lengths. This cantilevering distinguished these structures from the scores of simply supported concrete slab and beam bridges built during the period. Today, only three other such cantilevered girder bridges remain from the 1920s and 1930s: the C&S Railroad Overpass (5LA.8185) and Raton Creek Bridge (5LA.8187) in Las Animas County, and the Vincent Drive Bridge (5EP.972) in El Paso County. The Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct is particularly distinguished for its multiple spans and its excellent state of preservation.

As delineated by CHD, the proposed structure consisted of seven 46 foot deck girder spans supported continuously by reinforced concrete abutments and spill-through piers. The most noteworthy structural aspects of the viaduct were the arched haunches on the girders, which indicated that they were cantilevered over the piers. The Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct is distinguished architecturally by the bush-hammered concrete treatment on its spandrels and concrete guardrails with slotted cutouts.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 9 Page 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Colorado Department of Transportation. Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure No. K-I6-S. Located at CDOT. Denver, CO.

Colorado Highway Department Bridge Kardex File. Located at CDOT Bridge Division, Denver, CO.

First Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission 1910-1911. Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1911.

Fourth Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission 1915-1916. Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1917.

Fraser, Clayton B. Field inspection October 1998.

Fraser, Clayton B. "Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct," Historic Bridge Inventory, 31 March 2000.

"News of the Month." *Colorado Highways* 9:7, July 1930.

Plate on bridge: "Colorado State Highway Department Viaduct Over D.& R.G. W .R.R. Built by Mountain States Construction Co 1931."

Second Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission 1911-1912. Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1912.

"Status of Federal Aid Projects Under Contract." *Colorado Highways* 10:9, September 1931.

State Highway Commission Proceedings 1 (17 May 1910):19-24. located at CDOT Archives, Denver, CO.

Third Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission 1913-1914. Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1915.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 10 Page 5

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The viaduct is located on Colorado Highway 120 at milepost 0.17. The boundaries of this nomination consist of a rectangle of land 10 feet out in each direction from the footprint of the bridge.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nomination includes all the land directly and historically associated with the viaduct.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-3:

Name of Property: Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Location: Fremont County, Colorado
Photographer: Clayton Fraser
Date of Photographs: October 1998
Negatives: Colorado Department of Transportation

Photo No. **Photographic Information**

- 1 View to northwest across roadway
- 2 View to northeast through viaduct
- 3 View to north of guardrail detail

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct
Fremont County, Colorado
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number ___ Page 6

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Florence Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

