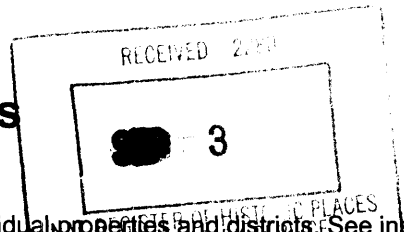


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1122



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 Denver & Rio Grande Railroad South Fork Water Tank

other names/site number 5RN352

2. Location

street & number US Highway 160 [N/A] not for publication

city or town South Fork [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Rio Grande code 105 zip code 81154

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.)

Suzanne Covington State Historic Preservation Officer August 19, 2002 Date

Signature of certifying official/Title

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 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:

- 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.

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 10/15/02 Date of Action

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad South Fork Water Tank
Name of Property

Rio Grande 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.)

Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Wood
roof Shingles
other Metal

Narrative Description

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

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948, MPDF

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DESCRIPTION

The 1881 Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) South Fork Water Tank sits on the north side of the railroad tracks running through South Fork, Colorado, at an elevation of 8,188 feet. The rail line originates in Alamosa on the east and runs west to its termination in Creede. After reaching Creede in 1891, the D&RG referred to this rail route as the Creede Branch. The branch was originally of narrow gauge (3 ft. width) but was fully converted to standard gauge (4 ft. 8½ in.) by 1902. The tracks remain in place though rail service west of South Fork ended in 1976.

The tank structure consists of a circular 50,000-gallon redwood and cedar tank supported by eight pairs of wood posts arranged in a square plan. The tank is held together by one-inch round metal stays or hoops joined by turnbuckles. The stays were originally spaced in gradually increasing distances from the bottom to the top of the tank. Shifting over time has resulted in the uneven spacing of the stays. The tank roof is covered by an overhanging octagonal hipped roof. The roof peak supports a ball and pedestal finial.

The support posts rise from exposed concrete footings set in square plan base. Each post pair is strengthened by cross braces. The posts support a circular plan tank base made up of a grid of intersecting joists. A square wood enclosure directly beneath the center of the tank contains the water intake pipe. The box is designed to prevent the intake pipe from freezing and is known as a frost box.

The support frame for the water spout remains on the tank's track side, as does the water level gauge. A wood ladder rises along the east side of the tower, terminating above the eave.

The body of the tank is painted yellow and the support posts and other wood elements are painted dark brown.

The water spout is the only significant loss of original materials and design. The tower has been repainted numerous times. The tank was recently reroofed with wood shingles closely matching the original cut wood shingles.

The setting has changed with the loss of the associated railroad buildings and structures. Originally the site contained a station, section house and storage sheds. A parallel siding served a livestock loading pin, a warehouse and a vegetable shed. All these structures have been moved or demolished. A siding to the south serviced a succession of lumber mills, including the Galbreath Tie and Timber Company and the Chicago Mill & Lumber Co. A lumber mill remains on the site.

Though changes occurred to the general setting, the water tank continues to stand next to the tracks in its place of operation. The South Fork Water Tank remains capable of conveying both its engineering and historical significance in association with local railroad transportation.

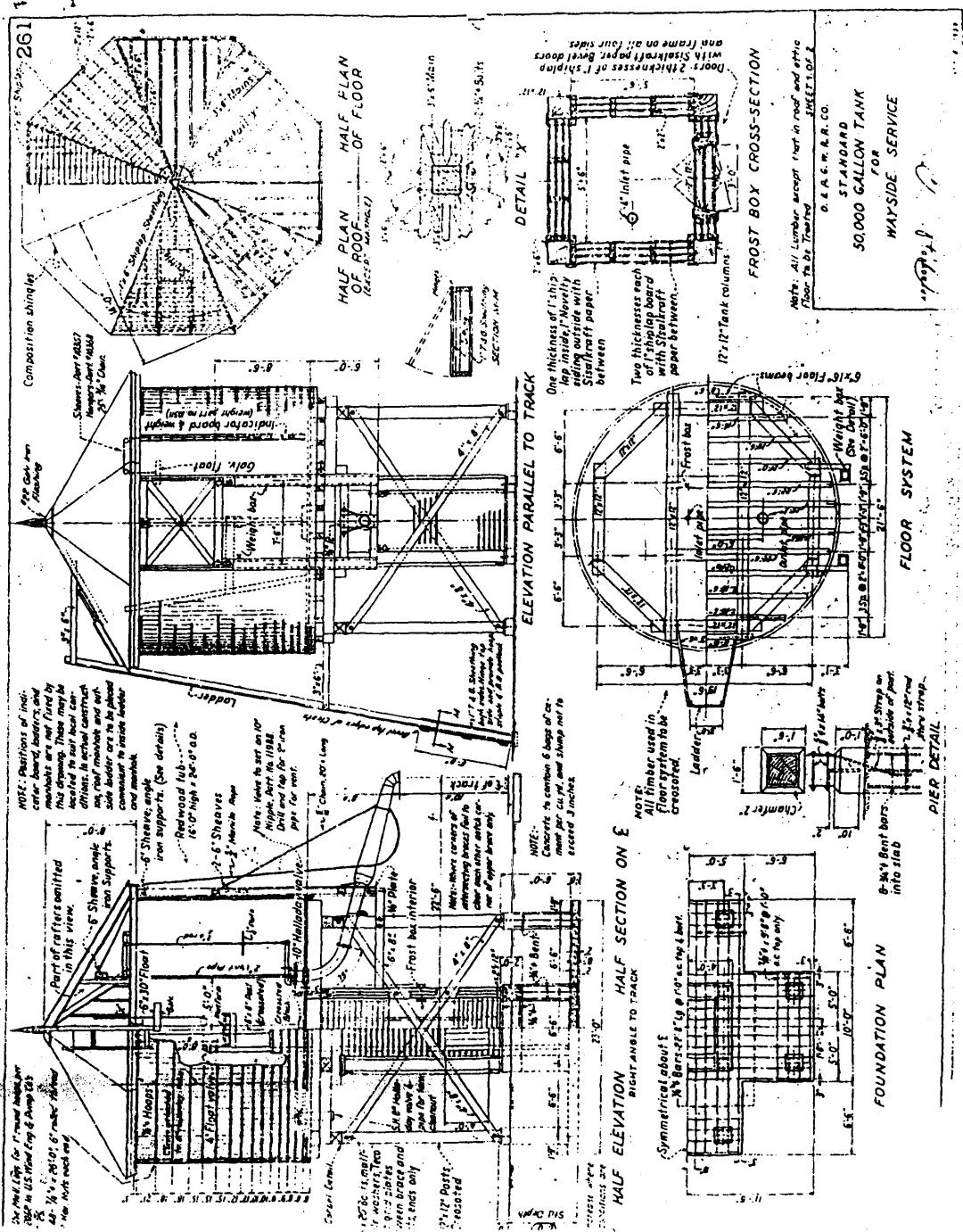
United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948, MPDF

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D&RGW RR Co. Standard Plan for 50,000 Gallon Water Tank
Similar to plan used for the South Fork Water Tank



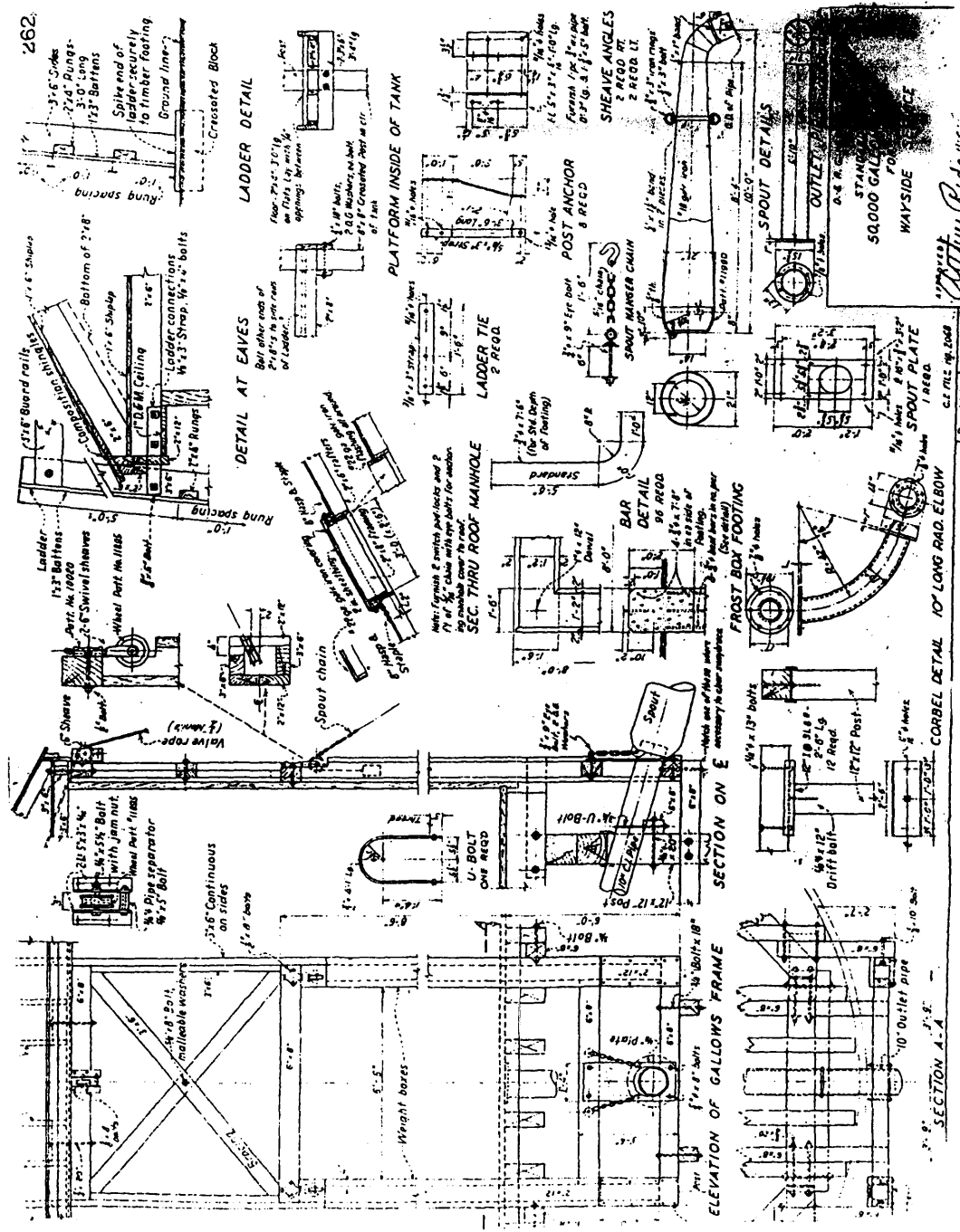
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Continuation Sheet

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948, MPDF

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D&RGW RR Co. Standard Plan for 50,000 Gallon Water Tank
Similar to plan used for the South Fork Water Tank



W. H. P. J. 11/1900

Rev. 10-13-11 Rev. 11-1-11

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad South Fork Water Tank
Name of Property

Rio Grande 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Engineering

Periods of Significance

1881-1956

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

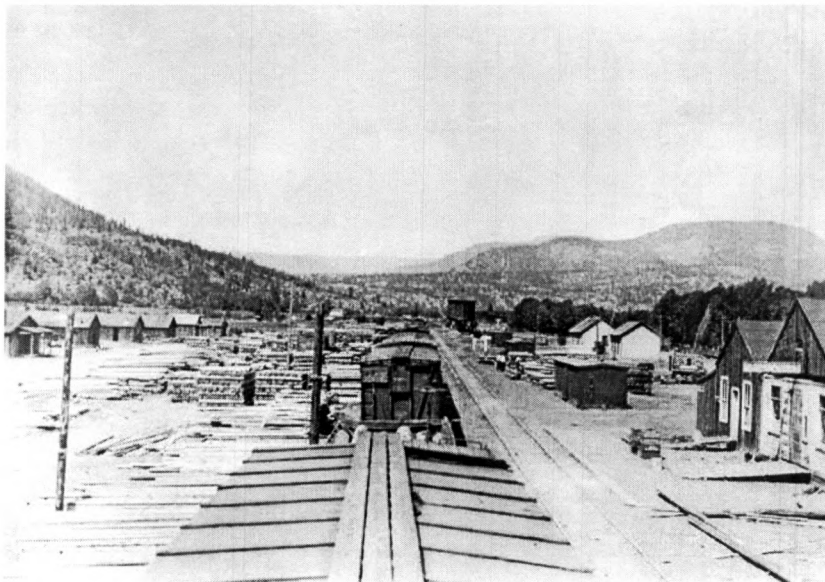
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
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SIGNIFICANCE

The 1881 Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) South Fork Water Tank is eligible for the National Register by having met the registration requirements for the water station subtype as defined in the *Railroads in Colorado 1858-1948* Multiple Property Documentation Form. The tank is eligible under Criterion A due to its association with the operation of the important Creede Branch of the Denver & Rio Grande (and later Denver & Rio Grande Western) Railroad. The tank provided water for countless steam locomotives from its construction in 1881 until the end of steam locomotive operation in 1956. The tank also served as the town's water supply. The period of significance begins in 1881 with the tank's construction and ends in 1956, marking the end of steam locomotive operation on the Creede Branch, a date of major importance in the history of the tank and its associated rail route.

The tank also meets the registration requirements under Criterion C as the structure represents a distinctive design and construction method associated with water tanks on the D&RG system. Tanks of identical design, materials and construction were built throughout the D&RG system in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Only a handful of these structures survive on the D&RG, and the South Fork Water Tank is the only surviving example along the 66-mile Creede Branch. Similar tanks exist on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (National Register) and the Durango and Silverton Railroad (National Historic Landmark).



South Fork in circa 1915. In this view to the west, the water tower stands on the right side of the train in the distance. To the left is the Galbreath Tie and Timber Company with newly cut ties stacked next to the tracks awaiting shipment.

Source: Western History Department, Denver Public Library

RAILROAD HISTORY

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad extended its narrow gauge tracks to South Fork from Alamosa in 1881. The railroad's managers wanted to access the timber resources available in the San Juan Mountains, both for general construction lumber, and more importantly, for the thousands of wood ties needed as the railroad extended its rails toward

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

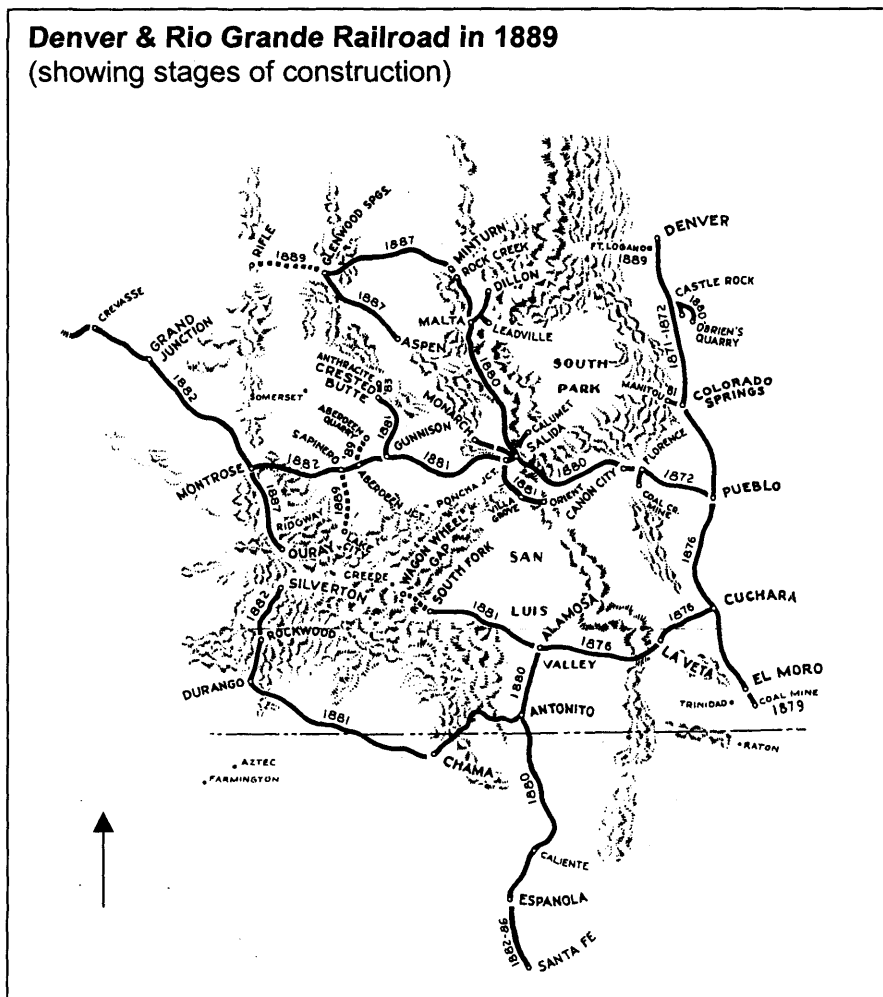
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948, MPDF

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Durango. The water tank at South Fork allowed locomotives to take on water before starting the trip back to Alamosa. The South Fork community was stable and populous enough to receive a post office in 1876.

In 1883 the railroad pushed its line 14 miles west from South Fork to reach Wagon Wheel Gap. The extension allowed the D&RG to bring health seekers from Alamosa and beyond to enjoy the area's mineral spring. The branch operated only in the summer months and failed to produce a profit. South Fork took an economic and population downturn as well in the

early 1880s, marked by the loss of its post office in May of 1883.



All this changed in 1889 when Nicholas C. Creede and George L. Smith discovered silver north of Wagon Wheel Gap near Willow Creek. This initiated the last of the big Colorado silver booms. Several towns sprang up to supply the influx of miners including Willow, Jimtown and Stringtown. The Willow Creek site was incorporated June 13, 1892, and named for Nicholas Creede. During the summer of 1890, the area's population grew by over 300 people a day. In a 90-day period over 500 shacks were erected and at its peak over 10,000 people worked and lived in the Creede area.

With the discovery of silver in Creede, the miners at Creede asked the managers of the D&RG to extend the line to serve the new mines. The railroad's directors were reluctant to invest in what might be a quick boom to bust cycle. A group of company officers with interests in the mines financed the rail line themselves with the understanding that the D&RG would purchase the ten miles of track upon completion. The extension cost \$75,000

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Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
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Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Fourth Division – Creede Branch 1923 Stations							
Station No.	Mile Post	Miles from Denver	Local Mileage	Stations		Agency Type	Elevation in feet
				Name	Type		
B247	251.71	246.91	0.00	Alamosa	W T	FC	7,546
	252.91	248.11	1.20	Tie Treating Plant		N	
B254	258.35	253.55	6.64	Willis		N	7,586
B258	262.54	257.74	10.83	Parma		N	7,616
B261	266.14	264.34	14.43	Zinzer		N	
B263½	268.32	263.52	16.61	Continental Oil Co.		N	
B264	269.01	264.21	17.30	Monte Vista	W	FC	7,665
B268	272.95	268.15	21.24	Torres		N	7,756
B271	275.44	270.64	23.73	Haywood		N	
B272	276.42	271.62	24.71	Freeman		N	
B274	279.02	274.22	27.31	Middaugh		N	
B278	282.85	278.05	31.14	Del Norte		FC	7,880
B284	288.89	284.09	37.18	Hanna		N	
B287	291.95	287.15	40.24	Granger		N	
B292	297.08	292.28	45.37	San Luis Lumber Co.		N	
B293	298.20	293.40	46.49	South Fork	W	N	8,188
B294	299.14	294.34	47.43	Derrick		N	
B297	301.67	296.87	49.96	Phillips		N	
B307	312.12	307.32	60.41	Wagon Wheel Gap	W	N	8,449
B313	318.09	313.29	66.38	Wasson		N	8,603
B315	320.12	315.32	68.41	South Creede		N	8,784
B316	320.70	315.90	68.99	Creede	W	FC	8,852
B317	321.81	317.01	70.10	North Creede		N	9,016

Station types:

W Water
T Telegraph

Agency types:

F Freight
C Station with full stock of Local and Coupon Tickets
N Non-Agency

and the Rio Grande made its last payment to the original investors in March of 1892. By that same year \$1,000,000 worth of silver was being shipped out of Creede every week.

Business on the Creede Branch was brisk and the extension paid for itself in the first four months of operation. At the peak of operations, there were fifty cars of incoming freight and

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161 cars of outbound ore each day. Twice daily passenger trains provided service to Alamosa, Pueblo and Denver.

The South Fork Tank took on a busier life with the increase in traffic to and from Creede. The South Fork Post Office reopened in 1892 and the lumber milling operation found new customers in the building boom at Creede. The D&RG operated five water tanks along its 66-mile Creede Branch. In addition to the South Fork tank, tanks stood at Alamosa, Monte Vista, Wagon Wheel Gap and Creede.

Creede suffered a significant economic downturn as a result of the Silver Crash and the subsequent depression of 1893. By 1900 the population dropped to just over 900 people. Mining continued but at a less frantic pace and tourists began to discover the beauty of the area. The mines in Creede produced enough ore to warrant the continued operation of the D&RG branch line. Even before the construction of the Creede Branch, the railroad began



South Fork in 1930. In this view to the northwest, the water tower stands in the middle left of the photograph.

Source: Western History Department, Denver Public Library

United States Department of the Interior
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Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
South Fork Water Tank
Rio Grande County, Colorado
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upgrading its network from narrow to standard gauge. In 1902, the section from Del Norte to Creede was converted and standard gauge trains traveled the entire route from Creede to Denver.

Passenger service to Creede continued until 1932 when another depression caused the railroad to retrench. Rail freight operations continued in and out of Creede until 1973. The South Fork tank continued to fill steam locomotive tenders until diesel locomotives replaced steam by 1956. Most of the railroad water tanks were demolished or were destroyed by deterioration or vandalism in the years following their abandonment. The South Fork tank is a rare surviving example of a once common structure in Colorado's railroad landscape.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. *Official Roster No. 11 of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad System and the Rio Grande Southern Railroad Company, 1923*. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1998.

Fraser, Clayton B. *Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948*, Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 1997. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Hargraves, Ed. *Rio Grande Depot – Creede*, Colorado State Register of Historic Properties Nomination, August 1, 1994. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Photograph collection, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad South Fork Water Tank Rio Grande County, Colorado
Name of Property County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|------|---------|----------|----|------|---------|----------|
| 1. | 13 | 356660 | 4170420 | 3. | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2. | | | | 4. | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | 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 Terrance W. Whelan, Town Manager (Additional material by OHP staff)
organization Town of South Fork date 12-18-2001
street & number PO Box 360 telephone 719-873-9854
city or town South Fork state CO zip code 81154

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 see continuation sheet
street & number _____ telephone _____
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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Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The water tank is located on a 30 foot by 40 foot rectangular tract of land leased from the Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company and known as the water tank site abutting the northerly right of way line of the railroad's Creede Branch opposite Mile Post 298 plus 1,315 feet, South Fork, Colorado.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This is the land historically associated with the water tank as it operated from 1881 to 1956.

PROPERTY OWNERS

Tank Structure

Town of South Fork
0100 Silver Thread Lane
(PO Box 360)
South Fork, CO 81154

Land

Union Pacific Railroad Company
c/o Rod Peterson, Senior Manager – Real Estate
Real Estate Department
1800 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68102

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-5:

Name of Property: Denver & Rio Grande Railroad South Fork Water Tank
Location: Rio Grande County, Colorado
Photographer: Terrance W. Whelan
Date of Photographs: December 18, 2001
Negatives: Town of South Fork

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	View to the northwest.
2	General site, view to the northwest.
3	Vew to the northwest.
4	View to the southeast.
5	General site, view to the east.

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National Park Service

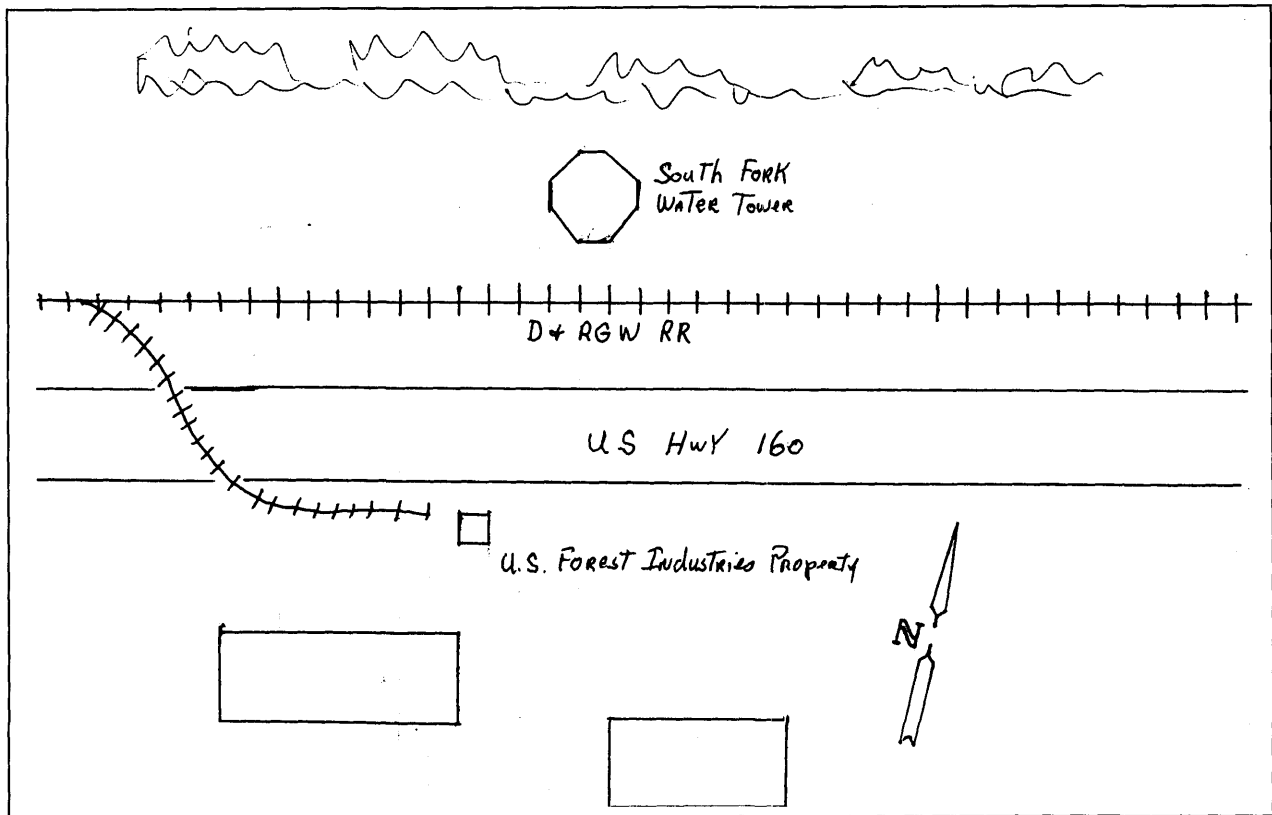
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Site Plan

Not to Scale



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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS
South Fork West Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series, 1967

South Fork East Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series, 1967

