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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Serpents Trail
other names/site number: Trail of the Serpent; Serpents Trail; Serpentine Trail; EME 100

2. Location

street & number: Colorado National Monument (N/A) not for publication
city, town: Grand Junction, Colorado (X) vicinity
state: CO code: 008 county: Mesa code: 077 zip code: 82431

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
() private	() building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
() public-local	() district	_____	<u>0</u> buildings
() public-State	() site	_____	_____ sites
(X) public-Federal	(X) structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	() object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
previously Colorado National Monument MPS listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. () See continuation sheet.

Ed Shears Signature of certifying official 3/8/94 Date
Chris Johnson State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property (X) meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Sumner Stewart Signature of Commenting or Other Official March 24, 1994 Date
State Historic Preservation Office State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

(X) entered in the National Register. Bill Boland Signature of the Keeper 4/31/94 Date of Action
() 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): _____

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related
(vehicular)

Transportation/pedestrian-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

No style

foundations N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other stone, earth

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Serpents Trail, a 1.6 mile hiking trail, is located within Colorado National Monument, a 32-square mile area displaying colorful and scenic geological formations. The monument, whose entrance is located approximately four miles southwest of Grand Junction in extreme west-central Colorado, was created by presidential proclamation in 1911 and is administered by the National Park Service. The monument embraces a number of scenic, deeply-cut canyons, monoliths, and mesas, ranging from less than five thousand to more than seven thousand feet in elevation. Serpents Trail lies approximately four-tenths of a mile from the eastern entrance to the monument and climbs the north side of No Thoroughfare Canyon. Originally an unpaved automobile road, the trail displays a number of construction features such as switchbacks, dry-laid masonry retaining walls, and rubble fill. Although a segment of Serpents Trail was obliterated by the construction of Rim Rock Drive in 1939-1940, the remaining portion retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Historic Use and Description

The opening up of Colorado National Monument to automobile travel and tourism involved two stages: 1) the building of Serpents Trail from 1912-21 as an access road to the monument and 2) the construction of Rim Rock Drive from 1931-50 as a scenic highway through the monument. The Serpents Trail enabled automobile access from Grand Junction, up the north side of No Thoroughfare Canyon to the top of the rimrocks near Cold Shivers Point. The unpaved, two-lane, two-way road was approximately nineteen feet wide and 2.5 miles long and used numerous switchbacks to ascend the side of the canyon. According to a March 1921 article in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, John Otto, long-time promoter of the monument and its first Custodian, named the road the Trail of the Serpent.¹

The Serpents Trail climbed up the north side of No Thoroughfare Canyon, from an elevation of approximately 5,050 feet at its present intersection with Rim Rock Drive to 5,900 feet at the canyon rim and 6,100 feet at Cold Shivers Point. At the time of its construction, only the top portion of Serpents Trail lay within the boundary of Colorado National Monument. An 850-foot gain in elevation occurred as the road proceeded in a westerly direction from the bottom of the canyon, making a series of sharp switchbacks to reach the rim of the mesa. The road rose an additional two hundred feet between the rim and Cold Shivers Point.

(X) See continuation sheet

¹ "Trail of the Serpent' Proves Popular," Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, March 1921, cited in Wills, p. 57.

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The width of the road was originally planned as sixteen feet, but this was later increased to nineteen feet to permit room for two automobiles to pass. The road was never paved but was surfaced with "a red iron composition which is said to pack as hard as bricks," found near the job site.² The road's steep path consisted of grades of 12 to 17 percent. The turns of the road's many switchbacks were reinforced with retaining walls of coursed, dry-laid rubble.

The number of switchbacks in the Serpents Trail is a matter of some dispute. The switchback is a centuries-old technique of climbing a steep slope through a series of lateral, zigzag turns of shallower grade. One source indicates that Serpents Trail contained fifty-two switchbacks.³ Local historian Al Look writes that "this remarkable route of pretzel bends was called the world's crookedest road with never one contradiction. The world famous Trail of the Serpent had fifty-four switchbacks or hairpin turns in its two and one-half miles."⁴ Discussing the existing Serpents Trail hiking path, Look states that there are "some 45 hair-pin curves in the old road way."⁵

The existing physical and map evidence, however, would suggest that there were no more than twenty-seven switchbacks in the original 2.5 mile road. This count is generous, as some of the turns could be viewed as sidehilling rather than true switchbacks. This analysis is based on a comparison of the USGS 7.5 minute Colorado National Monument quadrangles dated 1948 and 1973. A 1939 National Park Service map showing the existing Serpents Trail and the No Thoroughfare Canyon portion of Rim Rock Drive was also consulted.⁶ The disagreement over the number of switchbacks may stem from confusing the characteristics of an earlier hiking and horseback trail that Otto built up the canyon side in the same location in 1911-12 with the auto road completed in 1921.

Once reaching the mesa top, the road proceeded at a much shallower grade, ending at Cold Shivers Point on the rim of Columbus Canyon. An extension of the road from this point left Colorado National Monument and continued for approximately four miles in a southwesterly direction to Glade Park.

(X) See continuation sheet

² "Surface Put on Serpent Trail," Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, November 9, 1924, cited in Wills, p. 67.

³ Kania, John Otto, p. 91.

⁴ Look, p. 40.

⁵ Ibid., p. 75 and Wills, p. 76.

⁶ See, "Section E Betterment, Scenic Rim Rock Road, Colorado National Monument," NM-COLO 53039, February 1939.

Serpents Trail and Rim Rock Drive between Cold Shivers Point and the east entrance were digitized and lengths of specified road segments measured using a computer mapping program. No contemporary maps showing Serpents Trail in the 1910s or 1920s were located.

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Present Use and Appearance

The numbers in parentheses in the following discussion are keyed to photographs referenced on the sketch map accompanying this form.

In 1933, the boundary of Colorado National Monument was expanded to include all of Serpents Trail and a portion of No Thoroughfare Canyon needed for construction of the eastern segment of Rim Rock Drive.⁷ During the 1930s, National Park Service engineers considered upgrading Serpents Trail as an alternative to the No Thoroughfare Canyon section of Rim Rock Drive. The amount of excavation and retaining walls needed to bring Serpents Trail up to acceptable standards was "so appalling" that the idea was rejected. The upper portion of Serpents Trail was realigned and widened and became part of Rim Rock Drive in the 1939-40 period. Approximately eight-tenths of a mile of the original 2.5 of Serpents Trail were obliterated in the process, including five switchbacks. At the bottom of the road, one switchback (a distance of one-tenth of a mile) may also have been lost when the lower portion of Rim Rock Drive was constructed.

In April 1950, when the No Thoroughfare Canyon segment of Rim Rock Drive was opened, the Serpents Trail was closed to automobiles and became a hiking trail within the monument. A narrow access trail from Rim Rock Drive to the middle of the lowest switchback has been constructed and the lower half of that switchback is not maintained as a trail. The extant portion of Serpents Trail is 1.6 miles long and contains nineteen complete and two partial switchbacks. It rises 790 feet from an elevation of 5,050 feet in No Thoroughfare Canyon to 5,840 feet at the upper trailhead above Tunnel Number 3. (1)

Consistent with its purpose today as a pedestrian hiking trail, Serpents Trail is maintained at a narrower width (roughly eleven feet) than as originally built. The structure has never been paved and is currently surfaced with crushed gravel. (2, 5, 9) Twenty-one dry laid, evenly-coursed and random-coursed sandstone rubble retaining walls, mostly supporting the road's outside curves, exist along the roadway. These walls range in length from approximately twelve feet to approximately 153 feet. (6, 7, 8) Random rubble fill is also common along the trail. A few remnants of deteriorated wooden culverts also exist. Drill marks in rock ledges from original construction blasting are visible at many points. (4) One mortared guard wall, three feet high and fifty feet long, was constructed during the 1930s and is composed of thin, sandstone slabs. (3)

Scenic vistas, a major component of the road's original design, are unobstructed by modern intrusions and present themselves at various points along the trail. To the north, a magnificent panorama of the Grand Valley and Book Cliffs can be seen. The depths of No Thoroughfare Canyon and switchbacks of Rim Rock Drive are visible to the southwest. Along the trail are numerous sandstone ledges, natural formations, and native vegetation.

⁷ Proclamation 2037 in Proclamations and Executive Orders: Herbert Hoover, March 4, 1929 to March 4, 1933 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1974).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: () nationally () statewide (X) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria (X) A () B (X) C () D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) () A () B () C () D () E () F () G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance **Significant Dates**

Transportation

1921-1944 1921

Engineering

Landscape Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

John Otto; Mesa County, Colorado

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Significance

Serpents Trail is significant under criterion A for its representation of efforts to open up Colorado National Monument to the automobile, thereby allowing access to the area's scenic wonders to large numbers of visitors. When the road was completed in 1921, visitors could drive by car to the mesa top, rather than making a long trek by horseback or foot. The trail is also significant for its representation of early twentieth century recreational activities, having been established as a means of opening a scenic area to tourism. The trail is also significant for its landscape architecture, as the access route into the park was laid out to take advantage of scenic vistas, providing motorists with views of the Grand Valley, the floor and southern side of No Thoroughfare Canyon, and Columbus Canyon from Cold Shivers Point. Serpents Trail was the only automobile access to the monument until 1937, when the Fruita Canyon portion of Rim Rock Drive opened. The early auto road remained the only route from the Grand Junction end of the monument until 1950, when Rim Rock Drive through No Thoroughfare Canyon was completed. Construction of Rim Rock Drive in the late 1930s disrupted portions of the road. Serpents Trail was significant to the local community, as it greatly improved the access of Glade Park residents to the supply center of Grand Junction, cutting the travel distance between the two communities by almost half.

Serpents Trail is also significant under criterion C as illustrative of the engineering techniques used in the construction of early automobile roads in challenging terrain. The roadway was blasted and chiseled out of the steep canyon side, with the material for excavations and fills moved by human and animal power. The series of switchbacks used to allow the road to make the necessary climb in elevation were typical of early roadbuilding designs in such rugged terrain. The narrow width of the roadway, the construction of simple wooden culverts, the erection of dry-laid retaining walls, and the lack of paving all represent early construction techniques for such structures.

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This nomination is part of the multiple property submission, "Colorado National Monument Multiple Property Submission." Serpents Trail is associated with the historic context "Development of Automobile Routes and Access, 1911-1950". The period of significance for Serpents Trail dates from its completion in 1921, to 1944, the end of the historic period as defined by the National Register of Historic Places.

The property type represented by Serpents Trail is an early automobile road within Colorado National Monument. The nominated portion of trail meets the registration requirements outlined in the multiple property submission cover form. The resource retains its original location and setting. Although the maintained portion of the trail is somewhat narrower in places than the full width of the original automobile road, the full extent of the original road is still readily apparent. Original features, such as stone retaining walls retain a high degree of integrity of materials and workmanship, although some wooden culvert structures have deteriorated. A segment of the original Serpents Trail was obliterated with construction of Rim Rock Drive in 1939-1940. The nominated portion of Serpents Trail, 1.6 miles in length, is representative of the total original structure in its display of construction techniques and features and readily conveys the purpose, feeling, associations, and period of construction of the road.

Historic Context

The early history of trails and roads in the vicinity of Colorado National Monument is closely tied to the story of John Otto. Born in Missouri, Otto was an eccentric loner, called by his contemporaries "the hermit of Colorado National Monument," who came to Mesa County in 1907 and led the drive for the public recognition of the area's scenic resources. President William H. Taft designated the area Colorado National Monument in 1911, and Otto served as the first Custodian from 1911-27. Otto promoted monument tourism and development through numerous letters to the editor and other activities, as well as personally working on access routes in the area.

Beginning in 1909, Otto built a series of horseback and hiking trails into and through the Monument Mesa area as a means of increasing public access to and appreciation of the site. By December 1911, assisted by civil engineer J. F. Sleeper, Otto laid out the route of Serpents Trail from No Thoroughfare Canyon to the top of the rimrocks. The roadbuilder intended that the Serpents Trail route continue to Glad Park and thence to Moab, Utah, as part of a transcontinental roadway. Construction of Serpents Trail began in February 1912 but was not completed until 1921. Construction was sporadic due to difficulties in securing financing resulting from competition from other road projects. A hiking and horseback trail was built in the same location during the 1911-12 by John Otto and was used by workers during the construction of the road.

When state funding for the road appeared impossible in late 1912, Otto and other incorporators of a toll road company undertook the work themselves. Along the upper

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portion of the road a considerable amount of excavation work was done under Otto's direction and paid for with stock certificate income from the company. In assessing the proposed route of Serpents Trail in early 1912, Mesa County Surveyor James Fisk opined that the road "far surpasses in beauty though of a different type, the famous High Drive near Colorado Springs and the formations of the Garden of the Gods are dwindled to nothingness when compared with the majestic spires and the cliffs of No Thoroughfare."⁸

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce supported an alternative to Otto's Serpents Trail highway extension to Moab, Utah, and opposed financing for his project. Given such problems, work on the road was apparently set aside for several years. While Mesa County officials displayed some interest in the project in 1918, the project lay dormant until mid-1920, when nearby Glade Park residents began to push for better road access to Grand Junction and pledged \$5,200 to partially fund the project. Mesa County Commissioners finally called for bids on October 29, 1920 and on December 10, 1920 the Commissioners accepted the bid of J. S. Shaw to perform two miles of construction work up the side of No Thoroughfare Canyon along the route laid out by John Otto.

The services of J. B. Claybaugh for "engineering and personal supervision of the work" were retained and blasting and leveling operations on the upper portion of the road were underway by January 1921 under his direction.⁹ Much of the construction involved hand-drilling holes into the sandstone canyon side, inserting black powder or TNT, and blasting out the roadbed. Earth moving was accomplished by men using wheelbarrows, horses, and wagons. In June 1921, the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel reported that rock work on the road "is practically completed" and the road opened that fall. While finished to a rock grade in 1921, the Serpents Trail was not completely surfaced until late 1924 or early 1925. The total cost of the road was approximately \$12,000, with Glade Park residents putting up \$5,000 and the county \$7,000.

⁸ "Says Road Can Be Built for 6,500," Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, January 25, 1912, cited in Kania, "Report," p. 20.

⁹ "New Glade Park Road Will Eventually Be Part of a Cross Continent Highway," Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, January 13, 1921, cited in Kania, Report, pp. 62-63.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Grand Junction Daily Sentinel. Grand Junction, Colorado. 1910-50.

Houk, Rose. A Guide to the Rim Rock Drive: Colorado National Monument. Fruita, Colorado: Colorado National Monument Association, 1987.

(X) See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- | | |
|---|--|
| () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested | Primary location of additional data:
() State Historic Preservation Office
() Other State agency |
| () previously listed in the National Register | (X) Federal agency
() Local government |
| () previously determined eligible by the National Register | () University
() Other |
| () designated a National Historic Landmark | Specify Repository:
<u>National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Denver, Colorado</u> |
| () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____ | |
| (X) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # <u>CO-28</u> | |

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property: 5.7 acres

UTM References

A <u>1 2</u> <u>7 0 3 8 2 0 </u> <u>4 3 2 2 9 2 0 </u>	B <u>1 2</u> <u>7 0 4 8 1 0 </u> <u>4 3 2 2 5 0 0 </u>
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
C <u>1 2</u> <u>7 0 5 1 4 0 </u> <u>4 3 2 2 7 4 0 </u>	D <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing

() See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Serpents Trail extends fifteen feet on either side of the centerline of the trail, from its start at the intersection with the access trail from Rim Rock Drive to its terminus at the upper trailhead sign.

() See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The defined boundary encompasses all of the extant portion of Serpents Trail maintained as a trail within Colorado National Monument.

() See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: <u>R. Laurie and Thomas H. Simmons; revisions, Kathy McKoy, NPS, RMRO</u>	Date: <u>7/90; final revisions, 1/94</u>
Organization: <u>Front Range Research Associates</u>	telephone <u>(303) 969-2878</u>
street & number <u>12795 W. Alameda Parkway (RMRO)</u>	state <u>CO</u> zip code <u>80228</u>
city or town <u>Denver</u>	

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- Kania, Alan J. John Otto of Colorado National Monument. Boulder, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart, Inc., 1984.
- _____. "Report on the History of Trails Built by John Otto in the Colorado National Monument." July 11, 1984.
- Lohman, S. W. The Geologic Story of Colorado National Monument, Geological Survey Bulletin 1508. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1981.
- Look, Al. John Otto and the Colorado National Monument (Grand Junction, Colorado: Sandstone Publishing Company, 1962).
- Mehls, Steven F. The Valley of Opportunity: A History of West-Central Colorado. Denver, Colorado: U. S. Bureau of Land Management, 1982.
- Miller, Pat H. and Coale, Burton V. Colorado National Monument: A Fantastic Landscape Sculptured by Erosion. Fruita, Colorado: The Colorado and Black Canyon of the Gunnison Nature Association, 1969.
- Moore, Frank and Catherine. Grand Junction, Colorado. Interview by Sally Crum. June 1976.
- Peck, Harry. Grand Junction, Colorado. Interview by Ken Baird. N. d.
- Proudman, Robert D. and Rajala, Reuben. AMC Field Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance, 2d ed. Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1981.
- U. S. National Park Service. Colorado National Monument: Master Plan. Denver, Colorado: U. S. National Park Service, May 1976.
- Wills, Lila M. The Tale of the Serpent. N. p., 1982.
- Wixon, Charles W. ARBA Pictorial History of Roadbuilding. Washington: American Road Builders' Association, 1975.

HISTORIC STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM*

for

Serpents Trail

*The attached "Classified Structure Field Inventory Report" is a form that predated the NPS Historic Building and Structures Inventory Form which was completed for historic buildings in Colorado National Monument.

CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT

REGION: RMRO **PARK:** Colorado National Monument **PARK #:** 1378
STRUCTURE NAME: Serpents Trail **STRUCTURE #:** HS 9H
LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: North side No Thoroughfare Canyon **LOCATION CODE:** PG

NATIONAL REGISTER: No **DATE:** **MANAGEMENT CATEGORY:** A B X C D
NHL [Y or N X] **DATE:**
NPS LEGAL INTEREST: Fee simple **MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT:** No
TREATMENT RESPONSIBILITY: National Park Service
SMITHSONIAN #: 5ME100 **LCS ID #:**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE USE ONLY
PROPOSED ULTIMATE TREATMENT OR RMP CULTURAL COMPONENT DESIGNATION
 Preservation (PP) Restoration (RR) Reconstruction (CC) No Treatment (NO)
 Stabilization (ST) Neglect (NG) Remove (RM) Rehabilitation (RH)
APPROVAL DOCUMENT: **DATE:**
ESTIMATED TREATMENT COSTS: \$ **LEVEL OF ESTIMATE:**
ESTIMATOR: **STABILIZATION:** \$ **DATE:**
 APPROVED TREATMENT: \$ **DATE:**
APPROVED ULTIMATE TREATMENT COMPLETED [Y or N] **DATE:**

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1912-21 **CONSTRUCTION:** Structure
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER: Otto, John; Claybaugh, E. B. **CODE FOR DESIGNER:** O, E

HISTORIC CONTEXTS: Development of Scenic Automobile Routes and Access in Colorado National Monument, 1912-1950

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: The completion of Serpents Trail in 1921 was the first step in opening up Colorado National Monument to the automobile, and thereby to significant numbers of visitors. Serpents Trail remained the only automobile access route to the monument until 1937. The road was important both as a scenic drive, which afforded distant views of the surrounding area, and as an improved transportation route for Glade Park residents. The road is also significant for its representation of early road building techniques in the area, as exhibited by its excavated ledges, fills, stone retaining walls, and switchbacks.

EVALUATION OF STRUCTURE: CONTRIBUTING X NON-CONTRIBUTING
NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: A X B C X D

INTEGRITY STATEMENT: The recorded portion of the trail maintains a high degree of integrity in terms of plan, location, design, materials, and setting. A portion of the trail was obliterated by construction of Rim Rock Drive 1939-40. Only that segment maintained as a trail within Colorado National Monument was evaluated.

CONDITION: Good **DOCUMENTATION:** Fair **SIGNIFICANCE:** Local
IMPACT TYPES: ERO, DET **LEVEL OF IMPACT:** Low
IF STRUCTURE HAS BEEN MOVED, HOW? N/A **DATE:**

LOCATION: **STATE:** Colorado **COUNTY:** Mesa **SECTION:** N/A
U.S.G.S. QUAD: Colorado National Monument, Colo. (1962, PR1973) **SCALE:** 1:24,000
UTM COORDINATES: **ZONE:** 12 / **EASTING:** 703820 / **NORTHING:** 4322920 (A)
 ZONE: 12 / **EASTING:** 704810 / **NORTHING:** 4322500 (B)
 ZONE: 12 / **EASTING:** 705140 / **NORTHING:** 4322740 (C)

USE (NPS 28 CODE): **CURRENT USE:** 16DD, Trail
ORIGINAL USE: 16D Road **PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION:** HI
OWNERSHIP: PRESENT OWNER(S): U. S., National Park Service
ORIGINAL OWNER(S): U. S. **INTERMEDIATE OWNERS:** None

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STRUCTURE NAME AND NUMBER: Serpents Trail, #HS 9H

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: TYPE OF STRUCTURE (NPS 28 CODE): 16DD, Trail

DESCRIBE TYPE OF STRUCTURE: Unpaved hiking trail

DIMENSIONS: Approximately 1.6 miles long and 20 feet wide

COMPOSITION (NPS 28 CODE): 02, 40, 42

DESCRIBE MATERIALS: The structure is an unpaved hiking trail with crushed gravel surface, dry laid, evenly-coursed and random-coursed sandstone rubble retaining walls, and rock fill. Also visible are wooden culverts and blasted and chiseled rock ledges. One guard rail, constructed during the 1930s, is composed of mortared, thin, sandstone slabs.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION SPECIAL FEATURES/COMPONENTS: The road was constructed employing a number of dry-laid sandstone rubble retaining walls and sandstone rubble fill. Rock ledges exhibit the drill and blasting marks of original road builders. The road climbs up the north side of No Thoroughfare Canyon, from an elevation of approximately 5,050 feet to 5,740 feet at the upper trailhead, employing approximately 21 switchbacks in its ascent.

MODIFICATIONS: INTERIOR: n/a

EXTERIOR: X

EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS: Used for many years as an auto road, the trail in some places is maintained at a width of 11 feet, considerably narrower than the original road. One mortared, sandstone guard wall was constructed during the 1930s. The road was originally surfaced with a red iron composition, which was hard packed. Today the trail is surfaced with crushed gravel. Approximately 0.9 miles and six switchbacks of the original Serpent's Trail were obliterated when portions of Rim Rock Drive was built in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Most of this loss (0.8 miles) occurred between Cold Shivers Point and today's upper trailhead.

SITE SKETCH (INCLUDING ORIENTATION): See attached map; also see USGS map attached to nomination.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, Grand Junction, Colorado, 1910-50.

Kania, Alan J. **John Otto of Colorado National Monument** (Boulder, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart, Inc., 1984)

Kania, Alan J. Report on the history of trails built by John Otto within the Colorado National Monument to Bruce F. Black, Assistant U. S. Attorney. 11 July 1984.

Look, Alfred A. **John Otto and the Colorado National Monument.** Grand Junction, Colorado: Sandstone Publishing Company, 1962.

Wills, Lila. **The Tale of the Serpent.** N. p., 1982.

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER SURVEYS: NPS/LCS 1976, 1982

NEGATIVE NUMBERS: ROLL(S): 1 **NEGATIVES:** 3-34

DRAWING NUMBER(S): N/A

REPORT PREPARED BY: Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

DATE: July 1990

PROJECT TITLE: Determination of Eligibility, National Register of Historic Places