

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 22 1993  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instructions on *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 Zapata Ranch Headquarters

other names/site number Great Sand Dunes Country Club and Inn 5 AL 297

2. Location

street & number 5303 Highway 150 N/A not for publication

city or town Mosca  vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Alamosa code 003 zip code 81146

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] 2/11/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office  
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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Beth Boland

4/5/93

Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Name of Property

Alamosa, CO  
County and 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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	5	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	pool structures
0	0	objects
6	6	Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

DOMESTIC/single dwelling=house

AGRICULTURE/animal facility=barns

DOMESTIC/secondary structure=carriage house

OTHER/blacksmith shop

GOVERNMENT/post office

DOMESTIC/hotel=stagecoach stop

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

DOMESTIC/hotel

RECREATION & CULTURE/sports facility=golf course & swimming pool

**7. Description**

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

Late Victorian: other - log

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls WOOD/log

roof WOOD:shingle

other Fence: STONE

Roof: METAL/STONE

**Narrative Description**

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

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1878 - 1942

Significant Dates

1878  
1879

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado



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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters**  
**Mosca, Colorado**

7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Zapata Ranch Headquarters is located in a large cottonwood grove just west of the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains and three miles south of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. The grove is a large clustering of trees that then extends around an area of grassland in a crescent. To the west of the grove the land is open range of grasses and sage brush. This arid region at 7,800 feet above sea level is watered largely by artesian wells. The ranch headquarters brings water from the mountains via a pipeline. The grove extends from the headquarters area on to the south where it curves around the entire golf course. All the log buildings that will be discussed in this section are sheltered by the grove. [See Photographs 1-3.]

All the historic ranch structures were built of large logs, notched at the corners, and filled with chinking material between the logs. The earliest structure was built as a stage coach stop about 1870. A post office was established at the ranch in 1879. About 1880 a cattle barn, a horse barn, a chicken coop, and a blacksmith shop were built along with a corral area.

George W. Linger purchased the ranch in 1912. He and his family operated the ranch for 35 years making it one of the largest and most profitable ranches in Colorado. No evidence of the original ranch house remains, and the house currently at the headquarters was built by the Lingers in 1928 along with the garage. They hired Joe Lawrence, who was experienced in log construction methods, to assist in planning and building structures as well as maintaining all the buildings during the Linger ownership. Logs were cut in the nearby Sangre de Cristo mountains. Originally these logs also made the interior walls, some planed flat and some left rounded. Renovation projects did not remove original logs, but did replace chinking with Portland cement and covered interior walls with panelling or dry wall. All exterior wood trim — doors, window sashes and frames, fascia boards, etc. — has been painted white unless otherwise noted. Malcolm Stewart purchased the ranch in 1947 and was responsible for ranch house additions, new maintenance building, and re-building of the horse barn. Buildings will be discussed in order of their date of construction as best determined from available information. The Site Plan shows all structures, but delineates only several of the several hundred trees in the grove.

**CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES**

STAGE COACH STOP/CARETAKER'S HOME, #6 - CIRCA 1870:

This building is currently the caretakers home. It is a rectangular log building, 58.5 feet by 20.5 feet, with a shed roof addition across three-fourths of the back of the building. An enclosed entry porch extends from this. The foundation of the building is poured concrete, walls are log construction with saddle notching, and the roof is a low pitched gable covered with asphalt shingles. Metal vents extend through the roof. The west or front elevation has a centered door with a pair of windows directly to each side. These windows are 4-over-4, double-hung with wooden sash and broad wooden frames. Two more identical sets of paired windows are located equal distance between the inner windows and the building edge. A flat fascia board covers the rafter ends.

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
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**Narrative Description (continued)**

The north elevation has one centered window. It is a one-over-one light, double-hung window. It replaces the original entry door for the stage coach office. Gable ends under the roof are covered with horizontal boards.

The south elevation has a single, long rectangular window. It is believed this opening is original to the building. The shed roofed attachment has a horizontal fixed window comprised of two adjoining 4-light windows.

The east elevation is covered three-fourths of the way across by an enclosed shed roof addition. A gabled enclosed entry room extends out from a centered position. It has an entry door at the east end, and 6-over-6, double-hung windows, one each on the north and south sides.

The interior of the building no longer has any original log wall surface exposed. All walls are covered with plywood panelling. The room layout has changed over the years with the latest changes being made by the owner, Malcolm Stewart, in 1980.

Originally, this building was two small buildings with a space between. The north one-third and the south one-third of the house were built circa 1870. These buildings are essentially identical, the north one first used as the stage coach company office. The south building housed overnight guests and contained eight bunks. Both buildings were built on a layer of stones for a foundation with wood flooring on top. Both had a single door centered on the north end. Window configuration is unknown. The roofs were flat, resting directly on the top supporting logs.

Changes were made in 1912 when the Lingers purchased the ranch. The area between the two buildings was enclosed and the main door placed on the west side in the center section. A fireplace was directly across the room on the east wall. The door to the stage coach office was converted to a window. The change can be seen as the door frame still remains. Windows on the west elevation were enlarged. The roof was raised slightly and was made a gable roof. A shed-roofed porch was added across the back.

In 1980 under Stewart ownership, the concrete foundation was poured and back porch enclosed. The central fireplace was removed, and room partitions were added which changed the sectioning of interior space. A one-car wooden garage was built by the northwest corner of the house at some point.

The exterior of the building looks virtually unchanged since the 1912 modifications when viewed from the west or front elevation. This is the side which faces toward the rest of the headquarter's complex. [See Photograph 5.]

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Mosca, Colorado**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

CATTLE BARN/BATHS & SAUNA, #1 - CIRCA 1880:

The cattle barn is a small structure, 16 feet by 43 feet, currently used as the bath and sauna next to the swimming pool. Its dirt floor was replaced with a concrete slab floor and foundation in the 1950s. The original log walls are still in place with new cement chinking. The roof is flat, sloping slightly down from east to west, with exposed rafters on the east side. The west side has a flat fascia board and gutter along the length of the roof. The roof is corrugated steel with metal ventilation pipes. It was originally board covered with tar paper.

The west elevation faces the pool and has two doorways dividing the side into thirds. The doorway toward the north end is in an original doorway opening and has vertical boards covering part of the space to allow for a standard sized door. The north and south elevations each have one small new single-light, fixed window at the roof level toward the south end. The doorway and three other single light windows were installed in 1989.

The cattle barn faces in toward the corral. Original fencing and gates dating from the 1920s adjoin its walls to form the enclosed corral area (see Photograph 12).

P.O./ CHICKEN COOP/BOILER ROOM, #2 - CIRCA 1880:

This small building is now used as the boiler room. The log walls are 22 feet by 16 feet and rest on a concrete foundation. The flat roof is covered with corrugated steel and the roof slopes slightly downward from north to south. There are several metal ventilation pipes penetrating the roof.

The south elevation faces in toward the building complex. An unglazed wooden door was placed off-center to the east. Two sets of four-light windows are horizontally aligned. The two center windows open by sliding behind the fixed outer windows. This upgrade probably dates from Joe Lawrence and the Lingers.

The east and west elevations are solid logs with no fenestrations. The north elevation has a louvered vent which was probably added 1989. A low horizontal opening at the base of this wall, the chicken access door, has been closed in with logs. There are exposed rafter ends on the north side.

The building is believed to have housed the post office in the late 1800s (see Photograph 14).

BLACKSMITH SHOP/LAUNDRY, #4 - CIRCA 1880:

The laundry is housed in the old blacksmith shop. The concrete foundation supports log walls which are 18 feet by 18 feet. These walls have new Portland cement chinking, as do all the buildings. The roof was probably flat originally, and now is gabled, with a very low pitch, similar to the caretaker's house. The entry doorway is in the east elevation. It is a large doorway to the south of center.

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Narrative Description (continued)

The south and west elevations each have a pair of six-light windows adjoining each other. The windows are attached at the bottom and the top opens inward, in a hopper configuration. The west elevation has a single door near the north end which was added for egress in 1989 (see Photograph 15).

BUNK HOUSE & GARAGE/GUESTROOMS, #5 - CIRCA 1880 AND 1950:

This rectangular log building has a concrete foundation and a slightly sloping gambrel roof of corrugated steel with exposed rafters. The original log walls of the east half (1880) are still in place and show where a variety of alterations have been made through the years. The building is 40 feet by 50 feet and currently houses five guest units - three in the east half and two in the west half. The original log wall divides the interior in half.

The west half of the building was constructed in 1950 as a garage, and a new roof was put over the entire structure. The west elevation shows where there were once large garage doors. These doorways were enclosed in 1989 with vertical unpainted boards like those of the ranch house kitchen addition and the exercise rooms. The doorways to the two units are next to one another, south of center. There is an open entry porch with overhanging corrugated steel roof. The four windows on this elevation are single-light, casement windows. A display of branding irons hangs from the wall near the south end.

The east elevation has three doorways, one to each unit. The doorway at the north end has a small overhanging roof. The two units toward the south each have paired single-light, casement windows which are attached at the outer edges and both open in the middle. The south elevation has two sets of paired four-light, casement windows to the west and one single light, casement window toward the east end.

The north elevation has the original loft door remaining near the peak. The east side shows the ends of logs used to create an attic floor above the bunk house. Currently there is a large fixed window comprised of two different sized lights beneath the log ends. The west half, or the end of the garage, is one continuous wall from roof peak to ground level. It has large single light, fixed window and a pair of original style four-light windows.

The interior of this building is completely new as of 1989, but the north interior wall was left in its original condition with exposed logs (see Photographs 16-18).

RANCH HOUSE/INN, #5 - 1928:

The ranch house now houses five guest rooms, a lobby, restaurant, kitchen, restrooms, and a tiny telephone room. The original wall surface of hewn, flat-surfaced logs can be seen on two walls of the lobby and in the 1948 additions. These one-room, single story additions were added at both the northeast and northwest corners in 1948

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Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Mosca, Colorado

**Narrative Description (continued)**

by the Stewarts. They are actually two buildings from elsewhere on the ranch which were dismantled and moved. All original logs of the house remain, but in all areas, other than the lobby and room additions, the interior surface was covered by dry wall or panelling during the 1989 remodelling for adaptive re-use. Filling the corner between the ranch house west wing and the restaurant is the kitchen addition. It was built onto a former small bedroom which was all adapted to bring the kitchen up to code. The exterior of the addition is unpainted vertical board with a flat roof.

The restaurant is housed in an addition on the south elevation which was built by the Stewarts in 1950. The front porch was removed to build the addition which was used as a living room from 1950 to 1988. The original front wall is still intact inside. The restaurant is of log construction with a hipped roof and exposed rafters. The east elevation has two sets of single light fixed windows. The south elevation has four adjoining long, rectangular single light windows which are centered in the south wall. The west elevation has a single light fixed window, large stone chimney, double exit doors leading onto a large wooden deck, and a small casement window. The ranch house behind the restaurant is much the same as it was during the ranching days of the Lingers. Interior spaces have been slightly changed. In 1950, a stone wall of rounded river rock was built which surrounds the ranch house yard and has not been altered.

The 1928 ranch house of the Linger era is a two-story log structure with stone foundation. It has side gables, and a single long shed-roofed dormer extending from the south roof slope. A small shed-roof dormer with one window extends from the north roof slope near the west end. The entire roof is wood shingle. A central chimney extends through the roof. At some point, a shed roofed back porch area was enclosed between the two additions. There is one unglazed wooden door centered in the north elevation. Windows were placed on each side of the door in the enclosed porch and one in each of the additions. The four windows are identical - large rectangular fixed light picture window, with four small lights aligned vertically to each side in a casement window.

Features of the original 1928 ranch house can still be seen. The basic two-story, side-gabled house still exists with original exterior materials. The underside of the roof eaves is covered with tongue-and-groove boards. The eaves extend out to protect attic vents seen under the peak. The dormer windows are pairs of four-light (either sliding or awning style) windows with three sets across the dormer. This style of window can be seen in many of the outbuildings. The original ranch house had no porch. A rough open porch was added after a few years and later became an enclosed porch (see Photographs 5-8).

**NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES**

HORSE BARN/PRO SHOP, #10 - CIRCA 1920

The south half of this structure is currently being used as the golf pro shop and the north half as the owner's office.

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Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Mosca, Colorado

**Narrative Description (continued)**

The building is a one-story plus loft, rectangular barn, 27 feet by 43 feet, with a concrete foundation. Walls are constructed of logs with new cement chinking. The building is side-gabled with a corrugated steel roof. A hipped wooden vent is set at the mid-line of the roof ridge. A ventilation pipe penetrates the roof on the west slope.

The east elevation contains the main doorway which is slightly south of center. It is an unglazed, red painted wooden door with large metal hinges. Two original style four-light, awning windows are north of the door. A single-light pivotal window is south of the door.

Approximately three-fourths of the south elevation is a glass, multi-paned, fixed window. The loft door remains in its original position within the window area. The two four-light windows next to the loft door follow the original style windows. This wall was changed during the 1989 remodeling. This change and restoration was thoughtfully carried out. The south wall was most deteriorated due to exposure. It had a small door to the tack room in the southeast, which was removed and the loft door which remains. The barn was found to be four inches out of plumb, leaning to the west. Instead of shoring up the building to make restoration easier or removing the building, each window in the south wall was custom cut to accommodate the alignment.

The west elevation faces into the corral. The doors and windows are original in style and retain their original placement. The fenestrations on the north elevation may also retain original locations. This is uncertain. There are two four-light, fixed windows at the loft level of the north end, one on each side of the loft door with frames abutting. The first floor also has two four-light, fixed windows, one on each side of a small attached shed.

The interior space is open to the roof in the pro shop area. The office area has a floor separating the loft level. Original wooden roof beams and supporting beams are still in place with large metal brackets bolted in along the walls. All other interior materials are from 1989.

This barn was originally board and batten. In 1950, it was stripped to its structural framing. A concrete foundation was poured and log facing installed (see Photographs 9-11).

**MAINTENANCE BUILDING/CART SHED, # 9 - 1950:**

This log structure which was originally used as a maintenance building is now used to house golf carts. It is a one-story, low-pitch, gabled structure with shed roof attachment. The roof is corrugated steel. The gabled section has a concrete foundation and is 29 feet by 54 feet. The area under the shed roof has a dirt floor and is 11 feet by 43 feet. It contains four covered stalls with gates opening into the corral. The south end of the stall area is enclosed by a wall, while the north end has only fencing. The stall area under the shed roof has been left totally unaltered.

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
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**Narrative Description (continued)**

The south elevation has a large garage door centered under the gable roof. There is a small doorway to the area under the shed roof. On both the east and west sides, small gabled roofs can be seen where boxcars were inserted under the roofline. On the west elevation, the entire side of the boxcar is exposed on the exterior with a sliding door hanging from a runner. The other door on the west elevation is a double barn door made of vertical boards. The boxcar on the east side cannot be seen from the exterior due to the shed roof extension.

The north elevation has a set of original windows following the style of the earliest buildings. They are paired four-light, fixed windows with wooden frames.

The interior is open with roof structure showing, and the sides of the boxcars visible. This building is unaltered (see Photographs 19-23). This building is non-contributing only because it is less than 50 years old.

**GARAGE/OFFICE, #11 - 1928:**

The office for the Inn is housed in what was originally the garage. The interior was completely remodelled in 1989 and a new entryway was built on the south elevation. The structure was a single-car garage built by the Lingers in 1928 at the same time their house was constructed (see Photograph 14).

**EXERCISE ROOM & SHOWER, #8 - 1989:**

This structure is built of vertical boards in the same style as the new kitchen addition of the Inn and the door infills in the Guest House. It is a completely new structure as of 1989 and houses the exercise rooms and showers. It was built within the corral area and is largely hidden by the original corral fence.

**SWIMMING POOL, #7 - 1989:**

The swimming pool was also built within the corral area and is not highly visible.

**STORAGE SHED, #12 - 1989:**

This small structure sits to the west of the Inn and is constructed of vertical boards in the 1989 style.

**Conclusion:**

In general, the ranch retains its integrity of setting, feeling, association, design, materials and workmanship even though the use has changed. Even at this time, the office for the cattle operation is housed at the headquarters. The buildings reflect the evolution of the ranch from the three major periods of ownership: late 19th century, early 20th

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Mosca, Colorado**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

century, and mid-20th century. The changes to the ranch buildings were consistent with the materials and construction methods of log construction seen in the original buildings, and a cohesiveness has been retained among the buildings. The setting within the cottonwood grove and the relationship between buildings still portrays the original function. The character of the historic buildings has been carefully maintained and the ranch today is an excellent example of adaptive reuse. As previously noted, the new addition to the ranch house and the new buildings have been constructed with vertical boards to differentiate old from new, following the Secretary of Interior Standards.

All the gates and fencing, in and surrounding the corral area, are original to the Lingers' ownership. Many changes or additions to buildings were designed so that they would not affect the fencing (see Photograph 13).

## 8. NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SUMMARY:

The Zapata Ranch is historically significant under Criterion A in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Agriculture because it is one of the first and largest cattle ranches in the area, as well as a stage coach stop and post office. The Headquarters has remained part of this large cattle operation from the time construction was started in 1878 to the present time. The buildings are quality examples of log construction as it was practiced in the western mountains between 1870 and 1925. The use of this Ranch Headquarters is not just adaptive reuse, but is the continuing evolution of the ranch. The setting is also quite significant. It is within a cottonwood grove that was used for centuries as a place for human gathering. The first written mention of the grove in English chronicles was in the journal of Zebulon Pike in 1807. The setting remains basically unchanged. The history of the Zapata Ranch exemplifies the settlement and agricultural development of the San Luis Valley of Colorado, representing development that led to the settlement of the western United States.

In the 1870s, large cattle companies from Texas began moving into the San Luis Valley of Colorado taking over huge amounts of acreage for cattle production. Their exact method of acquiring this acreage is unknown. Zapata Ranch began operation in the early 1870s. Headquarters buildings were constructed for Neil Adee and William Durkee when they became the owners in 1878, however, no trace of the original ranch house is left. Buildings that do remain are the cattle barn, chicken coop, blacksmith shop, and bunkhouse. A post office was opened in 1879, and at some earlier point a stage coach office and sleeping quarters had been built in the grove. From 1878 to 1988, the Zapata

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Ranch headquarters housed the owners and operators of this large cattle raising business. The George Linger family made many significant contributions to the ranch as owners from 1912 to 1947. Buildings from their ownership include the ranch house and garage, the horse barn, and the corral area. During Malcolm Stewarts period of ownership additions were made to the ranch house and the maintenance building was constructed. In 1988, a new owner, Hisa Ota, put plans for adaptive re-use into affect and changed the ranch headquarters into the Great Sand Dunes Country Club and Inn. The log buildings still look much the same, and the atmosphere of the grove is scarcely altered. The Zapata Ranch is still a working ranch with 3000 head of cattle and 2000 bison. The caretaker lives at the headquarters complex, as he has for years, and his personality seems to forge a tie with those cattlemen who lived here over the past 120 years. The cottonwood grove remains essentially unaltered with few trees lost since the first written record of the site was made.

**CHRONOLOGY:**

The history of the Zapata Ranch began in the early 1870s when the Dickey Brothers, owners of the adjoining Medano Ranch, claimed another 50,000 acres and named it the Zapata. The history of these two ranches is tied closely together over the years. A stage coach stop was built in the Zapata cottonwood grove around 1870 and included two small buildings - one for the stage office and one to house overnight guests. In 1878, the ranch headquarters were established at Zapata, and in 1879, a post office was opened. These buildings were of log construction. As the ranch developed, out-buildings of the same log construction were added. Buildings circa 1880 included a chicken coop, cattle barn, blacksmith shop, bunk house, and corral. Several buildings added in the 1920s include the log ranch house and garage, a horse barn, and an enlarged corral. The buildings were well maintained over the years, and changes were in keeping with log construction methods and with the continuum of use. In 1950, the board and batten horse barn needed rebuilding and log construction methods were used. The maintenance building was also constructed, several additions made to the ranch house, and the stone wall built around the house. In 1989 all existing buildings were repaired and renovated, and three additional structures were built - a pool, locker room and shower, and a small kitchen addition for the Inn. The garage was remodelled to provide an office.

**EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT:**

The year 1807 began a new era for the San Luis Valley and the land which later became the Zapata Ranch. In January of this year, Zebulon Pike crossed the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains by way of Medano Pass and looked down at the Great Sand Dunes and the Valley for the first time. His guide was A.F. Vasquez. Pike had been sent by President Thomas Jefferson to explore and map part of the territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Pike's journal contains the first account of this region written in English, and he brought the information back to Americans anxious to continue their movement westward. On January 29, 1807, Pike's journal stated, "Finding

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

the distance to great to attempt crossing immediately to the river, in a direct line, we marched obliquely to a copse of trees, which made down a considerable distance from the mountains. Saw sign of horses. Distance 17 miles." The "copse of trees" is the grove of cottonwoods at the present day Great Sand Dunes Country Club and Inn.

Between 1807 and about 1870, the land that would become the Zapata Ranch remained part of the Ute Indians' territory. Much of the region around it was included in large Mexican Land Grants, but this section remained under the control of the Utes. The Mexican government continued to encourage attempts at settlement as they wished to increase their influence in this area. In the early 1870s, several Hispanic settlers made an effort to claim the Zapata area as part of a Land Grant issued in 1820. Papers submitted to the Surveyor General in 1874 were declared a forgery, and the property title was bought by a group of investors, which included the Dickey Brothers. This marked the beginning of the Zapata land as an official ranch.

**AGRICULTURE:**

Not until the large cattle companies moved into the San Luis Valley in the 1870s did the Utes completely relinquish the territory. A stage coach stop was constructed at this time in the Zapata cottonwood grove. The Dicky Brothers, a large cattle company from Texas, was the first to consolidate the area into one large ranch. They had the reputation of driving off smaller owners, both Hispanic and Euro-American, to gain control of vast acreage. From their headquarters at the present site of the Medano Ranch they controlled all the land on both the Medano and Zapata Ranches. Their cattle were taken to Leadville where they owned a large meat market that supplied the miners of the area.

Primary sources of information dealing with the Zapata Ranch are quite scarce as is common in rural areas. The following information comes largely from several persons who wrote down events related to them a number of years after the events occurred. The people relating the events were directly involved and supply the best available information and sense of the time. If and when other information comes to light, it will be submitted to supplement documentation.

Wesley Cole related some of his experiences with the Dickey Brothers in an interview he gave in 1933.

The Dickey Brothers were cattlemen, running around twenty thousand head, but there was plenty of profit in freighting and one of them went to St. Louis and bought fifty four head of fine mules and seven wagons, making six, eight muleteams and one, six mule outfit. . . .

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters  
Mosca, Colorado**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

The home ranch for the cattle operations was on Spring Creek and is now called the Medano. The Dickey brothers also operated a large meat market at Leadville, their shop as I recall being fifty feet wide and over a hundred feet deep. Every so often they would drive a bunch of a hundred and fifty head up there to butcher. It was on one of these drives that I got my first experience as a cowpuncher.

In 1878 the Dicky Brothers sold their holdings to Neil G. Adee and William Durkee. These holdings totalled 130,000 acres, and included both the Zapata and Medano Ranches. Adee and Durkee continued to expand the property by legally laying claim to land occupied by "squatters." Both men were from prominent Eastern families, Durkee being the son of the Durkee spice company founder. Their headquarters were at Zapata. One source states that Adee's mother actually paid the \$50,000 purchase price of the Zapata Ranch. The parents of both Adee and Durkee lived in New York City and were very enthusiastic supporters of their sons' cattle ranch venture. In 1879, a post office was established at Zapata. The post office and stage coach stop still stand at their original locations.

In the late 1880s Neil Adee committed suicide at the Zapata Ranch. Durkee sold the Zapata Ranch to F.L. Capers. It is believed that the Mormon Church purchased a large section of the Zapata Ranch from Capers in 1889 with plans for agricultural development. The plans for Zapata included construction of a flume on the Zapata Falls, a reservoir above the falls, and a system of canals to supply water to the farms. Some construction on the canals was started, but the system proved not to work efficiently. This, coupled with a disagreement about who actually owned the water rights, led to the project's failure. Both the Mormons and Capers sold their land to L.B. Sylvester. Sylvester had also purchased the Medano Ranch from Durkee in 1891, but lost it in foreclosure in 1900. Shortly after this he sold the Zapata Ranch to Fidelity Trust. The post office was closed in 1900.

In 1912 George W. Linger, an experienced cattleman, bought the Zapata and Medano Ranches. He, along with his sons and daughter, turned the ranches into one of the largest and most profitable ranches in Colorado. In this year, the first cattle that Linger had shipped from the east arrived in Fort Garland in such a weakened condition that they could not be driven to the ranch. Sleds were made, a cow laid on the sled, and pulled by four horses to the ranch. As there was no snow, it was hard pulling. Linger continued to bring in new breeds of cows until he had much improved his cattle herd. Both the Medano and Zapata ranch headquarters were utilized when the Lingers were on the ranch. The Lingers employed Joe Lawrence to assist in planning and building of log structures added to the ranch. He was skilled in the use of logs as a building material and spent summers working for the Lingers improving and maintaining ranch buildings. Logs were cut in the nearby Sangre de Cristos and brought to the headquarters to be used in building. Cowboys, fence crews, carpenters, cooks, a school teacher and many others were necessary to keep the operation going.

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**Zapata Ranch Headquarters**  
**Mosca, Colorado**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

The Lingers' ownership of the Zapata Ranch continued Neil Adee and William Durkee's successful venture in cattle ranching and improved the operation in several respects. The breed of cattle raised was improved and strengthened and numbers increased. The ranch headquarters was enlarged and improved upon, while still retaining the same style of log construction. The notable success of this cattle ranch continued to increase during the Lingers' ownership.

In 1947 the Lingers sold the Zapata and Medano Ranches to Malcolm Stewart of Texas. Stewart continued the successful operation of the ranches for cattle production. The original ranch buildings still existed when Stewart bought the ranches and those buildings needed were carefully maintained. The main log houses of both the Zapata Ranch and the Medano Ranch were enlarged and modernized. Some of the smaller log buildings no longer needed for ranching were torn down. The horse barn was rebuilt and a new maintenance building constructed, again of log construction. Stewart owned both ranches for about 25 years and then sold the Medano Ranch to John Firestone of Colorado Springs who continued its use as a working ranch.

In 1988, the Stewart family sold the Zapata Ranch to Hisa Ota, Rocky Mountain Bison Inc., who also acquired the Medano Ranch. The two ranches now combine to total 100,000 acres. Making every effort not to disturb the buildings or the atmosphere of the past, the Zapata Ranch headquarters was adapted for use as The Great Sand Dunes Country Club and Inn, a resort and golf course. It is still a working cattle ranch with the addition of a large herd of bison.

Other areas of the Zapata Ranch are also historically significant and may be nominated to the National Register at some future date. The Smithsonian Institute is excavating at several locations that have significant remains of Native American culture. In addition, a small five-sided structure built of squared logs, believed to be a Mexican church from the 1800s, still stands near an overgrown cemetery.

**9. Bibliography**

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**10. Boundary Description**

The boundary for the nominated area of the Zapata Ranch Headquarters is roughly rectangular in shape. The southeast corner is the corner post of the buffalo enclosure to the east of the caretaker's house. From this post, the line extends 450 feet north. The line then goes west for 750 feet, then south for 350 feet. The southwest corner is the point where the golf cart track heads into the golf course. From this corner, the line goes east and slightly south, approximately 750 feet, back to the corner post of the buffalo enclosure.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the historic buildings and structures associated with the Zapata Ranch.

