

**APPENDIX I**

**INTERAGENCY CORRESPONDENCE**

FEB 6 8 1991

# STATE OF COLORADO

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**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS**

4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
 Denver, Colorado 80222  
 (303) 757-9011



5 February 1991

Ms. Barbara Sudler  
 State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Colorado History Museum  
 1300 Broadway  
 Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Sudler:

Enclosed is the Highway Department report Cultural Resource Inventory of Colorado Department of Highways Project CY 20-0550-26, State Line North, U.S. Highway 550, La Plata County, Colorado. The survey resulted in the location and recording of 5 cultural resource sites, one of which had been previously recorded, and two prehistoric isolated finds. A reevaluation form was completed for previously recorded site 5LP2581, the Farmington Branch of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. This abandoned railroad grade was officially determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by your office on October 19, 1990. The four newly recorded sites are 5LP2612, 5LP2613, 5LP2615, and 5LP2616. Sites 5LP2613 and 5LP2615 are potentially eligible to the NRHP. If they cannot be avoided by ground-disturbing activities, testing should be conducted to determine the nature and extent of the buried cultural deposits. Sites 5LP2612 and 5LP2616 are considered insignificant, no further archaeological work is necessary. Isolated finds 5LP2611 and 5LP2614 are by definition, considered ineligible to the NRHP. No further work is necessary.

We request your concurrence concerning these determinations. If you require any additional information, please contact Debra Angulski at 757-9631.

Very truly yours,

*[Handwritten Signature]*

*for* Kenneth M. Gambrell  
 Acting Manager  
 Office of Environmental Review and Analysis

Enclosure

I concur *[Handwritten Signature]*  
 State Historic Preservation Officer

Date *Feb 13, 1991*



COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137

August 9, 1991

Kenneth M. Gambrill  
Manager  
Office of Environmental Review and Analysis  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, CO 80222

Re: Six Highway Projects

Dear Mr. Gambrill:

Thank you for your correspondence dated July 10 and 15, 1991, concerning the undertakings discussed below:

State Line North, US 550, CY 20-0550-26

We agree with your determination that Site SLP2686 is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. It does not meet any of the eligibility criteria. Therefore we also concur with your finding that no further work is necessary.

Crow Creek South of Briggsdale, BRS 0392(8)

We concur with your determination that Site SWL1631 does not meet the National Register eligibility criteria and no further work is needed.

Eighteen Proposed Borrow Pits near I-76, IR(CX) 076-1(150)

We agree with your finding that there are no historic properties located within the area of potential effects of this undertaking since only two isolated finds (SWL1792 and SWL1793) were discovered.

U.S. Highway 40 Cheyenne County Line to Wild Horse, CX 46-0040-09

We concur with your determination that Site SCH93 cannot be evaluated for inclusion in the National Register without further testing and, therefore, should be avoided until a test excavation program of shovel tests can be undertaken. Based upon the survey results, we agree that no other historic properties have been identified.

K.M. Gambrill  
August 9, 1991  
page two

I-25 between Owl Canyon and the Wyoming State Line. FRI(CX)

00 We agree with your finding that Site 5LR1471 should be classified as "need data" until testing can be undertaken to determine its National Register eligibility. Based upon the survey results, we also concur with your determination that there are no other historic properties in the area of potential effects.

SH 94 East of Punkin Center. SR(CX) 0094(27)

We concur with your determination that neither Site 5LN153 nor 5LN154 meets the National Register eligibility criteria. Therefore, based upon the survey results, we find that this undertaking will have no effect on historic properties.

Sincerely,



James E. Hartmann  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEH/KKP

# STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9011



September 25, 1997

Mr. James E. Hartmann  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado History Museum  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Mr. Hartmann:

**SUBJECT:** Archaeological Testing of Sites 5LP2613 and 5LP2615, La Plata County, Colorado

Recently Centennial Archaeology, Inc., under contract to the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), completed a test excavation program at each of the Ancestral Puebloan archaeological sites referenced above. A report documenting the results of this work, as well as site Reevaluation Forms, are enclosed for your files. The sites are located adjacent to US Highway 550 in La Plata County, very near the New Mexico state line; both were initially recorded and evaluated as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) during a 1990 highway corridor reconnaissance. The localities are in danger of impacts from proposed highway improvements under a future CDOT-administered construction project.

Testing was completed by Centennial personnel on two occasions between April 14 and July 1, 1997; CDOT Staff Archaeologist Dan Jepson also provided periodic field assistance and coordination. Neither site was found to possess a significant quantity or variety of intact cultural materials, and the locales are therefore assessed as not eligible for nomination to the NRHP. It is our recommendation that further archaeological study of the sites is unwarranted, and that construction be cleared to proceed.

We request your concurrence with the recommendations outlined above and in the enclosed report for sites 5LP2613 and 5LP2615. Should you have questions or concerns regarding the project, please contact Mr. Jepson at 757-9631.

Very truly yours,

*Rebecca Vickers*

*for* Kenneth M. Gambrell  
Manager  
Office of Environmental Services

Enclosures

I concur *[Signature]* Date 9/30/97  
State Historic Preservation Officer

**RECEIVED**

SEP 29 1997

CHS/OAHP

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# MEMORANDUM

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9011



RECEIVED  
SEP 29 1997  
COLORADO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DISTRICT 6  
CONSTRUCTION / PRE - CONSTRUCTION

**DATE:** September 25, 1997

**TO:** Carl Watson **Attn:** Priscilla Lukens

**FROM:** Dan Jepson 

**SUBJECT:** Results of Test Excavations, Archaeological Sites 5LP2613 and 5LP2615, La Plata County, Colorado; Project NH(CX) 550-1(5), New Mexico State Line - North

Between April and July, 1997, the two prehistoric archaeological sites referenced above were subjected to a test excavation program in order to determine significance according to criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A report documenting these studies is enclosed for your files. Neither site was found to possess a notable quantity or variety of intact cultural materials. In cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, we have therefore assessed the locales as not eligible for listing on the NRHP. It is recommended that further archaeological study of the sites is unwarranted, and that construction be cleared to proceed. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

cc: RF  
CF  
Vickers  
Foote, URS-Greiner (report only)  
CRMC, Farmington (report only)

O: 93084  
c: Lukens  
arch of rept original

2711005

93084

# MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9011



DATE: December 4, 1997

TO: Priscilla Lukens

FROM: Steven M. Wallace

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DEC 8 1997

COLORADO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DISTRICT 5  
CONSTRUCTION / PRE-CONSTRUCTION

SM Wallace

SUBJECT: Paleontological survey for project NH(CX) 550-1(005), New Mexico State Line - North

On July 8, 1992, Colorado Department of Transportation staff paleontologist Steven M. Wallace conducted on-the-ground reconnaissance for paleontological resources for project NH(CX) 550-1(005), New Mexico State Line - North. This project is for reconstruction of State Highway 550 between mileposts 0.00 and 3.65, south of Durango. As of June 16, 1997, design for this project extended approximately 300 meters south of the Colorado/New Mexico state line. I have not surveyed this 300-meter corridor, but this corridor has been cleared previously in a New Mexico Department of Transportation Environmental Assessment, "U. S. 550: Aztec, New Mexico to Bondad, Colorado", and I have concurred with that assessment (See my June 27, 1997 e-mail regarding the New Mexico DOT assessment: copy attached). The July 8, 1992 survey corridor lay on and along SH 550 between a point [MP 0.00] in the NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of section 19, T32N, R9W, and a point [MP 3.74] in the NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of section 6, T32N, R9W, La Plata County.

The geologic units mapped (Condon 1992) within the proposed project limits are an unnamed Holocene and Pleistocene alluvium unit and the Paleocene Nacimiento Formation. I saw no fossils in unnamed alluvium and Nacimiento Formation exposures I examined within the proposed project limits. Furthermore, I know of no previously recorded fossil localities **undoubtedly** within the proposed project limits. I have seen in the University of Colorado Museum collections a cast of an isolated molar of a triisodontine condylarth (an extinct, primitive ungulate mammal), collected by an amateur collector and identified as being from south of Durango, possibly from near State Highway 550. This tooth has not been assigned a formal UCM fossil locality number.

The Nacimiento Formation is, nevertheless, a known producer of scientifically important vertebrate (especially mammal) fossils in the New Mexico portion of the San Juan Basin (e. g., Williamson and Lucas 1992), south of the proposed project corridor, from the time immediately following the final mass extinction of the dinosaurs. I do not believe, however, that a construction monitor for paleontological resources is warranted for the proposed project because:

- (1) I saw no fossils in Nacimiento Formation exposure within the proposed project limits (and the

*P. Lukens*

formation is very well-exposed in a large, high road cut west of SH 550 between mileposts 2.25± and 2.45±), and

- (2) the particularly scientifically important mammal specimens that might be present in affected outcrop would be bones and teeth mostly from mammals no larger than a large house cat and, even if present, would be difficult to find during construction. Although I have collected bones and teeth of small mammals (e.g., prairie dogs and other ground squirrels) during construction monitors in the past, I have been able to collect significant numbers only on projects where friable sediments (i.e., loose, uncemented sand and silt) are stored temporarily on spoils piles and/or where topographic or lithological constraints have required heavy earth-moving equipment to move at a very restricted rate. These criteria do not appear to be applicable to the proposed project.

As a result, paleontological clearance is recommended for project NH(CX) 550-1(005) without any further work required. If paleontological resources are uncovered during project construction, this office should be notified immediately.

#### References

Condon, S. M.

1992 Geologic Framework of Pre-Cretaceous Rocks in the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and Adjacent Areas, Southwestern Colorado and Northwestern New Mexico. U. S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1505-A, p. A1-A56, geologic map at 1:100,000 scale.

Williamson, T. E., and S. G. Lucas

1992 Stratigraphy and Mammalian Biostratigraphy of the Paleocene Nacimiento Formation, Southern San Juan Basin, New Mexico, in S. G. Lucas, B. S. Kues, T. E. Williamson, and A. P. Hunt (editors), San Juan IV. New Mexico Geological Society Guidebook, 43rd Field Conference, p. 265-296.

SMW:smw

cc: RF, CF, Vickers, Wallace

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Laurie Blanz, CDOT  
**From:** Bryan Foote   
**Date:** June 5, 2002  
**Subject:** Chronology of Coordination with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)

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As we discussed, there have been three project efforts on the US 550 corridor which have required significant coordination with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT):

- Feasibility Study
- US 550 Corridor Scoping
- State Line North Design and Construction

The following generally outlines the communication and coordination which has taken place with the SUIT under each of these efforts:

Feasibility Study – CDOT has communicated with SUIT representatives during all stages of the corridor selection process. During the Feasibility Study, coordination with the SUIT included a workshop with SUIT staff and a formal presentation of the corridor alternatives to the SUIT Tribal Council. Prior to the final public meeting to present the Feasibility Study recommendations, the SUIT Director of Natural Resources was briefed to provide updates on the process, findings and initial recommendations. Prior to finalization, the draft Feasibility Study was transmitted to the SUIT for review and comment. At the request of the SUIT during the Feasibility Study coordination effort, the Animas River Corridor (ARC) was retained for further study.

US 550 Corridor Scoping – Representatives from the SUIT were invited and were present at the Agency Scoping Meeting that initiated the US 550 environmental process held on June 14, 2001. On September 20, 2001, CDOT issued a letter to Mr. Leonard Burch, Chairman of the SUIT Tribal Council. This letter stated that after further data collection and evaluation, and input from other coordinating agencies at the Agency Scoping Meeting, the US 550 corridor remains the preferred corridor and CDOT plans to proceed with the environmental documentation process for this corridor.

On November 13, 2001, CDOT and their consultant made a presentation to the SUIT Tribal Council. This presentation outlined the process that led to the selection of the US 550 corridor as the preferred corridor. The Tribal Council was informed that CDOT intends to proceed with development planning of the US 550 corridor. CDOT's consultant contacted Mr. Bob Piccoli, chairman of the SUIT Transportation Commission to inquire if the Tribal Council would be preparing a response. Mr. Piccoli stated that no formal response was likely and that he had not heard any opposition to CDOT's selection of the US 550 corridor. He stated that CDOT should proceed with the US 550 corridor environmental documentation process. CDOT will continue close coordination with SUIT during the planning and environmental documentation process.

US 550, State Line North Design and Construction – The design and construction of the US 550 State Line North project required a great deal of coordination with the SUIT. Construction of this project was completed in 2001.

The design of the project required the acquisition of two parcels of land from the SUIT. Prior to the acquisition of this ROW, a formal presentation was made to Tribal Council to review the purpose and need for the safety project and the preliminary design. At the meeting, Tribal Council expressed support for the project. Following this meeting, a series of negotiations took place between CDOT and the SUIT to discuss the terms of the transfer of the ROW, civil jurisdiction issues, and other outstanding issues between CDOT and the SUIT.

The outcome of these negotiations was that the SUIT would sell CDOT the ROW required for the two-lane safety project, and grant of the four-lane ROW was deferred for future discussion. CDOT and the SUIT also agreed to pursue the development and execution of an inter-governmental agreement to resolve the other outstanding issues between the Tribe and CDOT. This agreement has not yet been completed.

During construction of this project, the State of New Mexico accelerated the funding for their four-lane US 550 program. The result was that the final segment to the New Mexico/Colorado state line was due to be completed in 2002. This required CDOT to design and construct a four-lane to two-lane transition on the Colorado side of the state line. The design of this transition required additional ROW from the SUIT. Another formal presentation was made to Tribal Council, at which time they agreed to sell CDOT the additional ROW required for the transition. Construction of this transition is now complete and awaiting completion of New Mexico's project.

Cc: Tony Bemelen, CDOT  
Kerrie Neet, CDOT  
URS File 6742513

*Kumar - 6/10/02*

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



RECEIVED

OCT 04 2002

CHS/OAHP

October 1, 2002

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado Historical Society  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

**SUBJECT:** Determinations of Eligibility, Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango

Enclosed for your review are two reports and associated site forms that document the archaeological survey of a segment of US Highway 550 in La Plata County. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) proposes to widen and generally improve Highway 550 between Bondad Hill (milepost 4.4) and the intersection of the highway with County Road 220 on Farmington Hill (milepost 15.75), a distance of 18 km (11.35 mi). The entire survey corridor is within the external boundary of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation (SUIT), although only a portion of the properties bisected by Highway 550 are actually owned and administered by the Southern Ute Tribe. Because of the disparate land ownership, however, and the Tribe's desire to have a specific consultant (Muukui-ci Cultural and Environmental Services, LLC) conduct the cultural resource survey on its properties, it was necessary to complete two separate surveys and reports instead of the customary one. URS Corporation, under contract to CDOT, coordinated the survey project and authored the second report detailing inventory of non-tribally owned lands in the corridor. Please consider both reports collectively as fulfilling the Section 106 survey requirement for the proposed transportation undertaking. The reports and their respective results are outlined individually, below; a table combining all of the resources from both reports—and their National Register eligibility recommendations—is located at the conclusion of the narrative discussion.

### **Muukui-ci Survey Report**

The Muukui-ci inventory, involving approximately 175 acres of SUIT lands bordering Highway 550 (refer to Figure 1 in the Muukui-ci report), resulted in the documentation or reevaluation of 25 sites and 22 isolated finds. Of the site total, six are evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (5LP3104/4226, 5LP3107, 5LP3129, 5LP5949, 5LP6461, 5LP6463), 11 are considered potentially eligible contingent on the completion of test excavations (5LP3105, 5LP3127, 5LP6450-6452, 5LP6454, 5LP6455, 5LP6457-6459, 5LP6462), and eight are recommended as not eligible (5LP2616, 5LP3106, 5LP6056, 5LP6058, 5LP6453, 5LP6456, 5LP6460, 5LP6632). None of the isolates are considered significant, and all pertinent data at those localities was recorded in the field. Please note that 5LP3104/4226 consists of two previously recorded sites that have been combined to form one site, with the new site number being 5LP4226; the Smithsonian designation 5LP3104 can be retired or returned to your list of inactive site numbers. Also, as a result of a permit stipulation of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, seven of the non-eligible sites listed above are recommended for monitoring during initial earth-moving during construction in order to verify the supposed lack of cultural remains. The single remaining non-eligible locale (5LP6632) consists of a segment of historic road, for which the SUIT will not require monitoring. Both the eligible and potentially eligible sites are recommended for avoidance during construction associated with the Highway 550 improvements.

### **URS Survey Report**

The URS survey, totaling approximately 647 acres, resulted in the recordation of 14 archaeological sites and 16 isolated finds. As with the Muukui-cu survey, all 16 isolates are by definition not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP, and no further work at these localities is required. Three sites (5LP6665, 5LP6670, 5LP6673)

are considered NRHP eligible and are recommended for avoidance during all phases of construction in the corridor. The remaining 11 sites (5LP6666-6669, 5LP6671, 5LP6672, 5LP6674-6678) are evaluated as not eligible for NRHP listing, and no further work at any of these locales is required. The non-eligible sites recorded by URS are not on lands under the direct control of SUIT, and as such there is no construction monitoring stipulation for these resources.

The sites located within the US 550 Area of Potential Effect are itemized below:

**SUMMARY OF NEWLY RECORDED OR REEVALUATED SITES**

Site No. (SLP)	Component(s)	Recorder	NRHP Recommendation
3105	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci Cultural and Environmental Services LLC ("Muukui-ci")	Potentially Eligible ("Need Data")
3106	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Not eligible
3107	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
3127	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
3129	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
4226 (formerly 5LP3104/4226)	Protohistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
5949	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
6056	Historic	Muukui-ci	Not eligible
6058	Historic	Muukui-ci	Not eligible
6450	Protohistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6451	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6452	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6453	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Not Eligible
6454	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6455	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6456	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Not Eligible
6457	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6458	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6459	Prehistoric/Proto-historic	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible

**SUMMARY OF NEWLY RECORDED OR REEVALUATED SITES (contd.)**

Site No (SLP)	Component(s)	Recorder	NRHP Recommendation
6460	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Not Eligible
6461	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
6462	Protohistoric	Muukui-ci	Potentially Eligible
6463	Prehistoric	Muukui-ci	Eligible
6632	Historic	Muukui-ci	Not Eligible
6665	Prehistoric	URS Corporation ("URS")	Eligible
6666	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6667	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6668	Historic	URS	Not Eligible
6669	Historic	URS	Not Eligible
6670	Prehistoric/Historic	URS	Eligible (both components)
6671	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6672	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6673	Prehistoric	URS	Eligible
6674	Prehistoric/Historic	URS	Not Eligible (both components)
6675	Prehistoric/Proto-historic	URS	Not Eligible
6676	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6677	Prehistoric	URS	Not Eligible
6678	Prehistoric/Historic	URS	Not Eligible

The 38 isolated finds recorded in the study corridor (22 by Muukui-ci, 16 by URS), none of which are NRHP eligible, are listed in the enclosed documents (pp. 51-52 in the Muukui-ci report, p. 6-2 in the URS report), and this information is therefore not repeated here.

We request your concurrence with the site eligibility evaluations outlined above and in the reports. It is our judgement that the eligible sites are significant solely for the information they contain and are not of value for preservation in place. Once final project design has been completed and impacts to any of the eligible or potentially eligible sites have been determined, we will consult with the SUIT for any sites located on tribally owned lands regarding proposed mitigation of adverse effects. We will of course coordinate with your office as well regarding any affected localities once engineering plans are complete. Your response is

Ms. Contiguglia  
October 1, 2002  
Page 4

required for Federal Highway Administration and CDOT compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the revised Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations (36 CFR 800).

If you have questions or require additional information in order to complete your review, please contact CDOT Staff Archaeologist Dan Jepson at (303)757-9631.

Very truly yours,

  
for Rebecca D. Vickers  
Environmental Programs Manager

Enclosures

cc: L. Blanz (CDOT Region 5 Environmental Office)  
B. Mutaw (URS)  
E. Vinson (FHWA)  
RF/CF

I concur  Date 10/9/02  
State Historic Preservation Officer



# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259  
FAX (303) 757-9445



November 14, 2002

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado Historical Society  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Determinations of Eligibility, Historic Resources Inventory, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550 South, Bondad Hill to Farmington Hill, La Plata County

Dear Ms. Contiguglia:

This letter and the attached survey report and site forms constitute the request for concurrence on Determinations of Eligibility for the CDOT project referenced above, which involves improvements to an 11 mile segment of US Highway 500 south of Farmington Hill in La Plata County, Colorado.

URS Corporation, under contract to CDOT, conducted the field survey, performed the historical research, and authored the attached report. Three previously recorded historic structural sites and eighteen newly recorded historic sites are located within the project boundaries. These resources have been listed in the table below:

State ID	Address/Name	Dates	Eligibility Recommendation
5LP6619	11476 Highway 550	1904	Not eligible
5LP6620	6906 Highway 550	1946	Not eligible
5LP6621	6115 Highway 550	1940	Not eligible
5LP6622	10805 Highway 550	1947-48	Not eligible
5LP6623	6550 Highway 550	1952	Not eligible
5LP6624	12270 Highway 550	1949	Not eligible
5LP6625	12357 Highway 550	1930/1940	Not eligible
5LP6626	13249 Highway 550	1950	Not eligible
5LP6627	13495 Highway 550	1950s/1964	Not eligible
5LP6628	12793 Highway 550	1942	Not eligible
5LP6629	8566 Highway 550	1917	Eligible
5LP6630	12995 Highway 550	1899/1907-17	Eligible
5LP6631	N/A	1950s/1961	Not eligible
5LP6632.1	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible (re-evaluation)
5LP6632.2	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible (re-evaluation)
5LP6632.3	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible (re-evaluation)

State ID	Address/Name	Dates	Eligibility Recommendation
5LP6632.4	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible
5LP6632.5	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible
5LP6632.6	Aztec to Durango Road	1918-24	Not eligible
5LP6654.1	US Highway 550/State Highway 119	1924-35	Not eligible
5LP6695.1	Mason Lateral (Coop Ditch)	1901-1924	Not eligible

**5LP6619:** This site consists of a residence, an associated garage and two sheds. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate the residence was built in 1904. The site is recommended not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) because it meets none of the National Register criteria. While the site is located on land associated with a significant local individual, the relationship is indirect. The structures on the property do not exhibit any unique architectural features and do not have the potential to provide additional significant information.

**5LP6620:** This site consists of an adobe building and several associated features. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate a construction date of 1946. The structure's associated features include three pits filled with debris and some structural remains to the east, and a moderately large depression to the northwest. Other associated features include a concrete walkway that leads to what might be the remains of another building to the northwest of the main structure. This site does not meet any of the National Register significance criteria, and is therefore recommended as not eligible.

**5LP6621:** This site consists of a prairie style residence and an associated storage shed that were constructed in about 1940. The site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP, as it has no known historical associations, does not display unique architectural features, and displays little potential to provide significant information.

**5LP6622:** Known as the Eureka Grange, this site consists of a large, rectangular concrete building that was built in about 1946-47. The building once functioned as a grange for local farmers and ranchers in the area. It is recommended not eligible to the NRHP because it fails to meet any of the eligibility criteria.

**5LP6623:** This site consists of a vernacular style, wood frame residence built around 1952. The structure has undergone numerous modifications since its original construction, and as such it is recommended not eligible to the NRHP. Extensive remodeling has impacted the integrity of the residence, and none of the buildings on the site display the historical associations or architectural features to qualify under any of the eligibility criteria.

**5LP6624:** This site consists of a vernacular style wood frame residence and several associated outbuildings. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate a construction date of 1949. The site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP; the integrity of the main residence and garage have been compromised by recent modifications, and none of the structures on the site have any known historical associations or display unique architectural features.

**5LP6625:** This site consists of the Long Lane Schoolhouse, which is located on the west side of US Highway 550. The Long Lane School District was established in 1905 by early Florida Mesa pioneers W.R. Mason and Phil Craig, who built the first Long Lane school building in 1910; it burned down in 1929. The present structure was built in 1930 by Mason in the same location and was used as a rural school until 1959, when it was closed and sold for private ownership. This site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP. Although it was constructed by a locally significant individual, the building has been remodeled and reconfigured extensively enough that it no longer resembles the original structure. The other buildings on the site are of recent construction and display no historical attributes.

**5LP6626:** This site consists of a residence on the west side of Highway 550. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate that it was constructed around 1950. The current property owners stated that the western portion of the current structure was built on the foundation of a previous structure, a gas station that burned down in the late 1950s. This site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP because its integrity has been compromised and it does not have the historical associations or exhibit the architectural features to qualify under any of the eligibility criteria.

**5LP6627:** This site consists of a single wood frame residence with an attached garage on the west side of Highway 550. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate a construction date of 1964 for the structure, but local residents suggest that it functioned as a grocery store in the late 1950s. The site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP; it has no known historical associations and displays no unique architectural features or construction methods.

**5LP6628:** This site consists of a residence and a small wooden storage shed on the west side of Highway 550. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate a construction date of 1942. This site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP; it has no known historical associations and displays no unique architectural features or methods of construction.

**5LP6629:** This ranch complex, located on both sides of Highway 550, consists of a main residence, the original homestead cabin, a relocated military house, a renovated barn, and two large sheds, all of which were constructed between 1905 and 1957. The site was the original homestead of early Sunnyside pioneer William Alva Short, who arrived in the area around 1902 and worked at the Durango Smelter and other mines in the area before taking up farming on this homestead in 1905. He is also known for his role in the development of the Sunnyside School, where he served on its board of directors.

The ranch complex is recommended eligible to the NRHP under Criterion B for its association with William Alva Short. Both the original homestead cabin and the later residence still stand on the site and are largely intact. The original homestead cabin (1905) was only moved a short distance from its original location and is unchanged except for two small additions and new roof materials. The later residence (1917) has had some modifications; its porch was removed and there were three additions to the structure. However, the basic original building is intact. A shed built in 1915 is considered a contributing element to the ranch complex, but the other four structures on the site (the 1933 shed, the remodeled 1906 barn, the 1957 house, the root cellar) are considered non-contributing features.

**5LP6630:** This ranch complex, the homestead of Florida Mesa pioneer William R. Mason, consists of a residence, granary, and several associated sheds. There is some discrepancy regarding dates of construction for this site. According to La Plata County Assessor's records, the main residence was constructed in 1899, but the current farm manager claims that it was constructed between 1907 and 1917 from a Sears Catalog Kit. La Plata County records indicate that the property was patented in 1903 by

William R. Mason, one of the first settlers in the region to race for his claim on the Ute Strip when it opened to homesteading in 1899. Mason is also known for his role in establishing the Long Lane School District and for building the first and second schools in that district.

This ranch complex is recommended eligible to the NRHP under Criterion B for its association with William R. Mason. Although the main residence has been modified with additions on three sides and has deteriorated from weathering, the basic structure built by Mason is still present. Two of the other structures (the granary and barn) are considered contributing features of the complex because they are considered contemporary to the main farmhouse and because they are largely intact; however, three of the structures (the garage and two small sheds) are considered non-contributing because they are deteriorated and their relationship to the ranch complex is uncertain.

**5LP6631:** This site consists of a one story concrete building on the west side of Highway 550. La Plata County Assessor's records indicate a construction date of 1961, but local residents suggest a late 1950s construction. Arthur Mason, son of early settler William Mason, supposedly built the structure. This site is recommended not eligible to the NRHP; it has no known historical associations and displays no unique architectural characteristics.

**Aztec to Durango Road (5LP6632.1, 5LP6632.2, 5LP6632.3):** These sites are previously recorded segments of the Aztec to Durango Road, all of which were recorded in 2001 during an inventory of Ute lands along the project corridor. Segment 5LP6632.1 is located on the west side of Highway 550 north of Bondad Hill; segment 5LP6632.2 is located on the east side of Highway 550 just below the rim of Bondad Hill; and segment 5LP6632.3 is located on the east side of Highway 550 and winds up the south and east slopes of Bondad Hill. The Aztec to Durango Road was built between 1918 and 1924 to serve the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad-Farmington Branch. It replaced La Posta Road (State Highway 13) on the west side of the Las Animas as the principal route between Durango and Aztec, New Mexico. All of these road segments were previously recommended not eligible to the NRHP. No change in the previous finding is recommended.

**Aztec to Durango Road (5LP6632.4, 5LP6632.5, 5LP6632.6):** All of these sites are newly recorded segments of the Aztec to Durango Road. Segment 5LP6632.4 is located along the west side of Highway 550; segment 5LP6632.5 is located between the present Highway 550 alignment and the west edge of Florida Mesa; and segment 5LP6632.6 is also located between the present alignment of Highway 550 and the west edge of Florida Mesa. All of these segments are recommended not eligible to the NRHP. Each segment lacks sufficient integrity and does not qualify under any of the eligibility criteria. Segment 5LP6632.4 has been impacted by the construction of Highway 550 and private driveways and pipelines; segment 5LP6632.5 has been impacted by natural deterioration; and segment 5LP6632.6 has been impacted by erosion. None of these segments exhibit known historical associations or unique methods of construction. This road is not well documented in local histories of the area and given its short period of existence, was unlikely to have had much of an impact on the region. In addition, given that it was a gravel route, it is unlikely that it was widely traveled by commercial or tourist interests.

**5LP6654.1, US Highway 550:** This site consists of a segment of the current alignment of US Highway 550. It is a two-lane highway paved with asphalt that follows the previous alignment of the Durango to Aztec Road. It was constructed in phases between 1924 and 1935 and was originally numbered State Highway 19. It became Highway 550 in 1927 when all the state's roads were renumbered. It was paved sometime between 1935 and 1954, reconstructed in the mid-1950s, and widened to three lanes in 1978. This segment is recommended not eligible to the NRHP because it lacks sufficient integrity and fails to

meet any of the eligibility criteria. The road has been reconstructed since its original construction and segments have undergone additional upgrading and improvement.

**5LP6695.1, Mason Lateral Ditch:** This segment of the Mason Lateral Ditch in the project area appears to have been constructed sometime between 1901 and 1924. The ditch is recommended not eligible to the NRHP because it does not qualify under any of the eligibility criteria. Although it appears to have been named for Florida Mesa pioneer William Mason, it does not retain sufficient integrity to convey that significance. In addition, the ditch was moved during the construction of US Highway 550, and since 1964 the ditch has been upgraded and several concrete head gates, culverts, and diversion structures built along it. These modifications have significantly impacted the integrity of the ditch.

We hereby request your concurrence with these determinations of eligibility. Your response is necessary for the Federal Highway Administration's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations. If we do not receive a response to this correspondence within 30 calendar days, we will assume your concurrence with our findings as per the 1996 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CDOT and SHPO.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you require additional information, please contact CDOT Staff Historian Lisa Schoch at (303)512-4258.

Very truly yours,



for Rebecca D. Vickers  
Environmental Programs Manager

Enclosures

cc: Laurie Blanz, CDOT Region V  
Edrie Vinson, FHWA  
Dulaney Barclay, URS Corporation  
File/CF/RF



**COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

**The Colorado History Museum 1800 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137**

16 May 2003

Dan Jepson  
Acting Environmental Program Manager  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
Project Development Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
Denver, CO 80222

RE: Determinations of Eligibility, US Highway 550 South, CDOT Project NH 5501-011,  
La Plata County

Dear Mr. Jepson:

Thank you for your recent e-mail correspondence dated 15 May 2003, concerning a letter of concurrence for CDOT Project NH 5501-011. As you are aware, CDOT assumed SHPO concurrence in January 2003, after our office failed to provide comments within the required 30-day period. However, your e-mail dated 15 May 2003 indicates that an official letter of concurrence is required in order to close the file. Therefore, please accept this letter as our office comment on this project.

The project encompasses twenty-one historic structural sites. We concur with CDOT's assessment that nineteen of the properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register:

5LP.6619	5LP.6626	5LP.6632.4
5LP.6620	5LP.6627	5LP.6632.5
5LP.6621	5LP.6628	5LP.6632.6
5LP.6622	5LP.6631	5LP.6654.1
5LP.6623	5LP.6632.1	5LP.6695.1
5LP.6624	5LP.6632.2	
5LP.6625	5LP.6632.3	

In addition, two resources were listed as "eligible" in 2002 by the consulting firm URS:

5LP.6629 (8566 Highway 550)  
5LP.6630 (12995 Highway 550)

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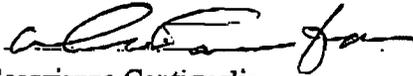
OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

303-866-3392 \* Fax 303-866-2711 \* E-mail: oahp@chs.state.co.us \* Internet: www.coloradohistory-oahp.org

Our office does not concur with these assessments of eligibility. Further research is needed to determine whether the sites are, in fact, eligible for listing on the National Register. The consulting firm indicated that both properties were eligible under Criterion B. However, listing under this criterion is somewhat difficult to establish without additional information. As presented, we cannot conclusively determine that pioneers William Short (5LP.6629) nor William Mason (5LP.6630) were truly significant persons as defined by the National Register criteria. The sites themselves may be eligible under Criterion A (agriculture) or C (architecture), but more information is needed to establish this claim. Therefore, both 5LP.6629 and 5LP.6630 have been assigned a "Needs Data" determination in lieu of the usual "eligible" or "not eligible."

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joseph Saldibar, Architectural Services Coordinator, at (303) 866-3741. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer, and  
President, Colorado Historical Society

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259  
FAX (303) 757-9445



May 29, 2003

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado Historical Society  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Revised Determinations of Eligibility, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550 South,  
Bondad Hill to Farmington Hill, La Plata County

Dear Ms. Contiguglia:

This letter constitutes the request for concurrence on revised Determinations of Eligibility for the CDOT project referenced above, which involves improvements to an eleven mile segment of US Highway 500 between the base of Bondad Hill and the top of Farmington Hill south of Durango in La Plata County.

On November 14, 2002 we sent you a letter requesting eligibility determinations for historic resources present within the US 550 project corridor. In that correspondence we recommended that sites 5LP6629 (8566 Highway 550) and 5LP6630 (12995 Highway 550) are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. In correspondence dated May 16, 2003, you indicated that more information is necessary to make a determination of eligibility for these properties, and consequently characterized them as "needs data." Upon further review, however, we have determined that these two sites do not, in fact, meet minimum criteria for NRHP listing, and we request your concurrence with this evaluation. The remainder of the site eligibility determinations outlined in the November 14, 2002, letter, with which you formally concurred on May 16, 2003, remain unchanged and in effect.

After additional review of the survey report, site forms, and National Register Bulletins 15 and 32, CDOT has determined that neither 5LP6629 nor 5LP6630 meet the requirements for NRHP eligibility under Criterion B. Although sources indicate that William Alva Short (5LP6629) and William Mason (5LP6630) were both early settlers of the region and were somehow involved in the development of rural schools and school districts in the area, there is not a clear connection between the properties and the specific accomplishments of Mr. Short or Mr. Mason. Furthermore, under the National Register guidelines, properties must retain integrity from the period of significant historical associations. In the case of 5LP6629, three of the structures have been relocated, and the main house has been modified with recent additions and upgrades. Overall, the site does not physically resemble what it did when Mr. Short resided there. At site 5LP6630, the main house has been modified with three different additions and it appears to have some newer windows, siding, and roof materials, and in general does not resemble the structure in which Mr. Mason resided.

With regard to the eligibility of these properties under NRHP Criteria A and C, we initially determined that the sites were not eligible under these criteria and we have not changed our recommendation in this respect. The properties lack the historical associations to qualify for eligibility under Criterion A; with

Ms. Contiguglia  
May 29, 2003  
Page 2

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respect to Criterion C, the properties do not exhibit the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or methods of construction or the physical integrity to qualify for eligibility. Site reevaluation forms reflecting the revised eligibility evaluations are included herewith.

We believe that an appropriate level of research was conducted in the initial evaluation of these properties such that additional work will not produce substantive results. Materials pertinent to the project and these sites specifically were reviewed at the Durango Public Library, Animas Museum, La Plata County Assessor's Office, and the Fort Lewis Center for Southwest Studies, as well as the Colorado State Engineer's Office, U.S. Geological Survey, and CDOT's Region 5 Office. CDOT believes that its consultant, URS Corporation, has exhausted all reasonable and appropriate research possibilities.

We hereby request your concurrence with these determinations of eligibility and effect. Your response is necessary for the Federal Highway Administration's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations.

If you require additional information, please contact CDOT Staff Historian Lisa Schoch at (303)512-4258. We look forward to a written response to this correspondence within 15 calendar days, as stipulated by the 1996 CDOT/SHPO Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Section 106 and State Register Act Procedures for Historic Resources.

Very truly yours,



Daniel A. Jepson  
Acting Environmental Programs Manager

Enclosures

cc: File/CF/RF



COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

8 AUGUST 2003  
The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137

Dan Jepson  
Acting Environmental Program Manager  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
Project Development Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
Denver, CO 80222

RE: Revised Determinations of Eligibility, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550 South,  
Bondad Hill to Farmington Hill, La Plata County

Dear Mr. Jepson:

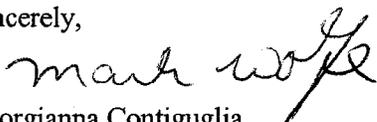
Thank you for your recent correspondence dated 29 May 2003, concerning the proposed improvements to an eleven-mile segment of Highway 550 in La Plata County. Our office has reviewed the submitted materials. We apologize for the delay in our response.

We concur with your revised determinations of eligibility for the Short Ranch (SLP.6629) and Mason Ranch (SLP.6630). William Short and William Mason may have been active in the early development of the area, but no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that their activities meet the National Register requirements for Criterion B (significant person). The two ranch sites have a number of older structures, but many of these structures have been altered over the years. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that these particular ranches are significant under Criterion A (history) or C (architecture), especially when compared with other ranch properties in the County.

In your letter dated 29 May 2003, you indicated that all "reasonable and appropriate research possibilities" have been exhausted. As such, we feel that these two properties are not eligible for the National Register, as it would be difficult if not impossible to nominate them successfully given the current information available. Therefore, we find that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed US 550 project.

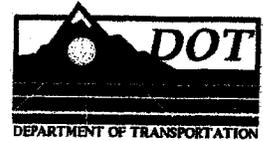
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joseph Saldibar, Architectural Services Coordinator, at (303) 866-3741. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*for*   
Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer, and  
President, Colorado Historical Society

# STATE OF COLORADO

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
 Environmental Programs Branch  
 4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
 Denver, Colorado 80222  
 (303) 757-9259



## RECEIVED

February 27, 2004

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
 State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Colorado Historical Society  
 1300 Broadway  
 Denver, CO 80203

MAR 01 2004

CHS/OAHP

Dear Ms. Contiguglia:

**SUBJECT:** Additional Information Regarding CDOT Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550 South, Bondad Hill to Farmington Hill, La Plata County

As you will recall from previous correspondence, CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration are presently completing an Environmental Assessment for a segment of US Highway 550 in La Plata County north of the New Mexico state line. Accompanied by survey reports, CDOT submitted documentation regarding determinations of eligibility for archaeological and historical sites in early October and mid-November 2002, respectively. You concurred with our evaluations for the archaeological resources on October 9, 2002, and with the historic site assessments in letters dated May 16 and August 8, 2003. Copies of these documents are enclosed herewith for your reference.

The study area as described in our initial submittals extended from the south end of Bondad Hill (highway milepost 4.4) north to the US 550/County Road 220 intersection (milepost 15.75) at Farmington Hill, a distance of 11.35 miles. However, the EA corridor actually includes the 4.4-mile section of highway south from Bondad Hill to the state line (refer to enclosed map). The so-called "State Line - North" corridor was comprehensively inventoried for cultural resources prior to highway improvement projects during the 1990's. We mistakenly did not include this area in our previous submittals, though it is in fact part of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) established for the present EA. (For data specific to the State Line - North undertaking, please refer to correspondence in your files related to CDOT projects CY 20-0550-26 [1991] and NH(CX) 550-1(5) [1999].)

The additional 4.4-mile corridor along US 550 contains eight previously documented sites (five historic, three prehistoric) and five isolated finds within the 300-foot wide APE; the sites are shown in the table below.

SITE NO.	ERA <sup>1</sup>	SITE NAME OR TYPE	NRHP ELIGIBILITY <sup>2</sup>	COMMENTS
5LP2580	H	Twin Rocks Community Ditch	OE 10/19/99	HAER 1990 062
5LP2581.1	H	D&RGW Railroad	ONE 10/19/99	
5LP2612	H	Structure Foundation	ONE 2/13/91	Also recorded as SLP612
5LP2613	P	Open Camp	ONE 9/20/97	Test excavated, 1997
5LP2615	P	Open Camp	ONE 9/20/97	Test excavated, 1997
5LP2686	H	Rock Art	ONE 8/9/91	
5LP4831	H	Camp, Artifact Scatter	ONE 6/8/99	
5LP4835	P	Open Camp	ONE 6/8/99	

<sup>1</sup>Era - P, prehistoric; H, historic

<sup>2</sup>NRHP Eligibility - OE, officially eligible; ONE, officially not eligible

As this tabulation indicates, all but one of the sites has been determined officially not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The lone exception is the Twin Rocks Community Ditch (5LP2580), which was found to be officially eligible on October 19, 1990. The ditch crosses beneath US 550 approximately one-half mile north of the state line. Soon after the ditch was evaluated for significance, but prior to the highway widening that was then being planned, the Army Corps of Engineers documented the ditch to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards; copies of those materials are attached to the 5LP2580 site form in your files. By definition the previously documented isolated finds (5LP2611, 5LP2614, 5LP4832-4834) are not NRHP eligible, and therefore they are not discussed further.

CDOT concurs with the existing National Register eligibility evaluations for all of these resources, and recommends no changes to this data. Given the official determinations of eligibility (in addition to the HAER documentation completed for 5LP2580), we have not included any additional materials herewith, with the exception of the map referenced above. Correspondence regarding effects to all National Register eligible historic properties within the US 550 APE in the context of alternative alignments will be forwarded to your office in the near future.

We request your concurrence with the site eligibility findings outlined above. A signature line is included below for your convenience. Your response is necessary for the Federal Highway Administration's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations. If you have questions or require additional information in order to complete your review, please contact CDOT Senior Staff Archaeologist Dan Jepson (303) 757-9631.

Very truly yours,

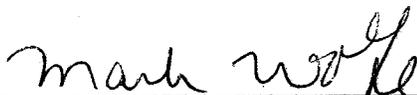


for Brad Beckham  
Environmental Programs Manager

Enclosure

cc: Kerrie Neet (Region 5 Environmental)  
B. Mutaw (URS Corporation)  
RF/CF

I concur:

  
For Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer

3/3/04  
Date

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



March 4, 2004

Mr. Byron Frost, Lands Division Head  
Department of Natural Resources  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box 737  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Dear Mr. Frost:

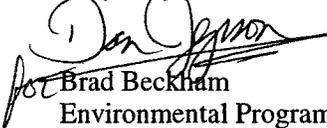
**SUBJECT:** Additional Cultural Resources Information, Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550, New Mexico State Line to Durango Environmental Assessment

In October 2002 CDOT forwarded to you the results of archaeological surveys conducted along US Highway 550 north of Bondad Hill for the project referenced above. In a meeting with you and other Southern Ute Indian Tribe representatives on January 29, 2004, a preliminary assessment of effects to National Register eligible and potentially eligible sites in that corridor were presented to you in relation to several proposed alternative highway alignments. Since that time, however, we became aware that the segment of the EA corridor between the New Mexico state line and Bondad Hill—which was surveyed for archaeological remains in the 1990s during earlier highway improvement projects—was not incorporated into this discussion, nor had we included this area in earlier correspondence with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). As such, we transmitted a letter to SHPO in late February 2004 that detailed this oversight and requested concurrence with determinations of National Register eligibility for five historic sites, three prehistoric sites and five isolated finds located in that area. A copy of that correspondence, including a map showing the location of the sites, is attached for your files.

Of the eight previously recorded sites, three appear to be located partially or entirely on lands owned by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (5LP2580, Twin Rock Community Ditch; 5LP4831, a temporary historic camp; and 5LP4835, a prehistoric open camp). The remaining sites and isolated finds are either within the highway right-of-way or on privately owned properties adjacent to the highway. Documentation for all of these resources should be in your files, as they were recorded in association with earlier highway projects (i.e., Weaselskin Land and Cultural Services recorded and evaluated the three sites located on tribal property in 1997, prior to the widening of US 550 north of the state line). Only one site (5LP2580) is eligible for listing on the NRHP, whereas the others have been determined not eligible. The Army Corps of Engineers completed documentation of 5LP2580 to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards in 1990, a copy of which should also be in your files.

These sites were not included in the discussions at the January 29 meeting noted above; however, as appropriate they will be incorporated into the determination of effects to be developed by CDOT and submitted both to your office and the SHPO in the near future. If you have questions regarding any of the information contained herein, please contact CDOT Cultural Resources Program Manager Dan Jepson at (303)757-9631.

Very truly yours,



Brad Beckham  
Environmental Programs Branch Manager

Enclosures

cc: K. Neet (Region 5 Environmental)  
B. Mutaw (URS Corporation)  
RF/CF

# MEMORANDUM

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



**DATE:** March 4, 2004

**TO:** Kerrie Neet

**FROM:** Dan Jepson 

**SUBJECT:** Additional Cultural Resources Clearance Information, Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550, New Mexico State Line to Durango EA

As you are aware, we recently submitted additional information to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding historic properties located in the southern-most portion of the US Highway 550 corridor referenced above. Eight previously recorded sites and five isolated finds are located within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) established for the project between the New Mexico state line and Bondad Hill, a distance of approximately 4.5 miles. Of these resources, only one has been evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (SLP2580, Twin Rock Community Ditch), whereas the others are not eligible. The SHPO has concurred with all of our eligibility findings for this portion of the corridor, as noted in the attached letter. Historic and archaeological resources in the remainder of the US 550 APE, including areas inventoried for potential alternative alignments north and east of Bondad Hill, have previously been submitted to SHPO for eligibility determinations, and responses received by this office (refer to concurrence letters in your file dated October 9, 2002, and May 16 and August 8, 2003).

A letter specific to effects assessments for National Register eligible and potentially eligible sites in the project APE will be submitted to SHPO in the near future. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

Attachment

cc: B. Mutaw (URS Corporation)  
RF/CF

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



# RECEIVED

July 14, 2004

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado Historical Society  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

JUL 20 2004

CHS/OAHP

**SUBJECT:** Determinations of Effect, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango Environmental Assessment, La Plata County

Dear Ms. Contiguglia:

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) project referenced above proposes to widen and generally improve US Highway 550 between the New Mexico state line (milepost 0.0) and the intersection of County Road 220 (milepost 15.75) in La Plata County. As you are aware from previous correspondence, an Environmental Assessment is presently being prepared to document the social, economic and environmental effects of the project, including historic properties issues. In letters dated October 1, 2002 and February 27, 2004, we coordinated with you regarding National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility determinations for archaeological sites in this corridor. This letter is specific to effects determinations for 21 historic properties within three alternative alignments proposed for the project. Ten of the sites have been determined officially eligible for the NRHP, whereas the remaining 11 sites are designated as officially needs data. Please refer to enclosed Table 1 for a comprehensive list of these resources and their respective eligibility assessments.

Of the 21 sites, two prehistoric locales (5LP5949 and 5LP6665) will be adversely affected by one or more US 550 alternatives being proposed. We have determined that there will be no adverse effect to one historic archaeological site (5LP2580, Twin Rocks Community Ditch). The remaining sites will be completely avoided during all phases of construction associated with the highway improvements; Table 2 provides a summary of effects to each site by alternative.

Not surprisingly, the No Action Alternative will not impact any NRHP eligible resources. Alternatives 1 and 2, which remain largely on the existing US 550 alignment, will result in adverse effects to one site (5LP6665) in the form of ground disturbance during construction. Alternative 3, which remains on or very near the existing alignment except for a 1.5-mile segment of new roadway east of Bondad Hill, will similarly adversely affect two sites (5LP5949 and 5LP6665). In consultation with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT), we have determined that data recovery excavations at 5LP6665 and 5LP5949, as appropriate and necessary depending on the alternative selected for construction, provide the most favorable option for mitigation of adverse effects.

As noted in our February 27, 2004 eligibility letter, the Twin Rocks Community Ditch (5LP2580)—which crosses beneath US 550 approximately one-half mile north of the state line—was evaluated as NRHP eligible in October 1990. Soon after the ditch was determined eligible, but prior to the highway widening then being planned, the US Army Corps of Engineers documented the ditch to Historic

American Engineering Record (HAER) standards. These materials are attached to the SLP2580 site form in your files. The present undertaking proposes very minor improvements to the area containing the ditch, primarily because widening and other safety improvements along this section of highway were completed in the mid-1990s. Given the substantial work already undertaken to document SLP2580, coupled with the fact that the physical integrity of the feature as it exists today will not be compromised by the current project, CDOT recommends that there will be no adverse effect to the ditch.

Depending on which alternative alignment is eventually selected as Preferred, a number of prehistoric sites located on SUTT-owned lands that have been determined not eligible for the NRHP will be subjected to archaeological monitoring during the initial stages of construction, as requested by SUTT. A final tally of which sites require this action will be determined prior to construction, and the monitor coordinated with SUTT.

We request your concurrence with the effects determinations outlined herein and illustrated on Table 2. Your response is necessary for the Federal Highway Administration's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations (36 CFR 800). A concurrence line is provided below for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. If you require additional information in order to complete your review, please contact CDOT Senior Staff Archaeologist Dan Jepson (303)757-9631.

Very truly yours,

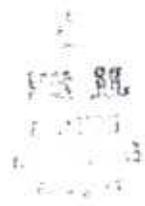


Brad Beckham  
Environmental Programs Manager

Enclosures

cc: J. Holst (Region 5 Environmental)  
B. Mutaw (URS Corporation)  
CF

I concur: Georgianna Contiguglia July 21, 2004  
Date



**Table 1**  
**NRHP Eligible and Need Data Historic Properties Within the US 550 Area of Potential Effect**

<b>Site No. (SLP )</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Resource Type and Age</b>	<b>Eligibility Determination and Date</b>
2580	Twin Rocks Community Ditch	Historic irrigation ditch, A.D. 1887	Officially Eligible, 10/19/1990
3105	None	Specialized activity site, A.D. 900-1150	Officially Needs Data, 2/18/1993
3107	Dog-Leg Site	Habitation site, A.D. 1625-1700	Officially Eligible, 12/19/2000
3127	None	Camp site, A.D. 1-400	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
3129	None	Camp/Specialized Activity Area, Unknown prehistoric	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002
4226	None	Open lithic & ceramic scatter with features, A.D. 1400-1780	Officially Eligible, 7/19/1996
5949	None	Temporary camp, 1800 B.C - A.D. 500	Officially Eligible, 12/19/2000
6450	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 1550-1680	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6451	None	Lithic artifact scatter	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6452	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 900-1300	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6454	None	Lithic artifact scatter, A.D. 500-1300	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6455	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 900-1150, A.D. 1680-1780	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6457	None	Lithic artifact scatter, A.D. 700-950	Officially Needs Data, 6/11/2002
6458	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 500-900	Officially Needs Data, 6/11/2002
6459	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 900-1300, A.D. 1680-1780	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6461	None	Habitation, A.D. 700-950	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002
6462	None	Lithic/ceramic artifact scatter, A.D. 1680-1780	Officially Needs Data, 10/9/2002
6463	None	Possible habitation, A.D. 750-1150	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002
6665	None	Small hamlet, A.D. 500-900	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002
6670	None	Large hamlet, A.D. 500-900; Historic sweat lodge, 1920s-1950s	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002
6673	None	Small hamlet, A.D. 500-900	Officially Eligible, 10/9/2002

**Table 2**  
**Effects to NRHP Eligible or Need Data Historic Properties by US 550 Alternative**

Site No. (SLP )	ALTERNATIVE			
	No Action	1	2	3
2580 (Twin Rocks Community Ditch)	No effect	Ditch parallels and crosses previously improved section of highway. HAER docu- mentation completed in 1990. <b>No Adverse Effect</b>	Ditch parallels and crosses previously improved section of Highway 550. HAER docu- mentation completed in 1990. <b>No Adverse Effect</b>	Ditch parallels and crosses previously improved section of Highway 550. HAER docu- mentation completed in 1990. <b>No Adverse Effect</b>
3105	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
3107	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
3127	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
3129	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
4226	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
5949	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site within proposed ROW <b>Adverse Effect</b>
6450	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6451	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6452	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6454	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6455	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6457	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6458	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6459	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6461	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6462	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6463	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6665	No effect	Site within proposed ROW <b>Adverse Effect</b>	Site within proposed ROW <b>Adverse Effect</b>	Site within proposed ROW <b>Adverse Effect</b>
6670	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>
6673	No effect	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>	Site outside proposed ROW <b>No Effect</b>

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



July 26, 2004

Mr. Byron Frost, Lands Division Head  
Department of Natural Resources  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box 737  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Dear Mr. Frost:

**SUBJECT:** Effects Determinations, Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango  
Environmental Assessment

Attached for your files is a copy of the concurrence letter regarding effects to archaeological sites located within the US Highway 550 Environmental Assessment corridor referenced above. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), we have determined that two sites eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), 5LP5949 and 5LP6665, will be adversely affected by one or more proposed US 550 alignment alternatives. (The former will be impacted only by Alternative 3, whereas the latter will be impacted by Alternatives 1, 2 and 3.) Data recovery excavations at 5LP5949 and 5LP6665 prior to construction of the Preferred Alternative, as necessary and appropriate, are recommended as the most beneficial way to mitigate the adverse effects. Site 5LP5949 is located on lands owned by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT); conversely, site 5LP6665 is situated on non-Indian owned lands within the external boundary of the SUIT reservation.

The SHPO has also concurred that the proposed effects to the NRHP eligible Twin Rocks Community Ditch (5LP2580) will not be adverse, as this resource has been extensively documented and the project will not alter its physical integrity.

If you have questions, comments or concerns about the effects determinations and proposed mitigation measures for the US 550 project, please contact CDOT Senior Staff Archaeologist Dan Jepson at (303)757-9631.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Beckham', is written over a horizontal line.

Brad Beckham  
Environmental Programs Branch Manager

Enclosures

cc: J. Holst (Region 5 Environmental)  
B. Mutaw (URS Corporation)  
CF

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Ave.  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



**DATE:** July 26, 2004

**TO:** Kerrie Neet **Attn:** Jon Holst

**FROM:** Dan Jepson 

**SUBJECT:** Effects Determination, Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango EA

Attached for your files is a copy of the concurrence letter regarding effects to archaeological sites located within the project corridor referenced above. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), we have determined that two sites eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), 5LP5949 and 5LP6665, will be adversely affected by one or more US 550 alignment alternatives. (The former will be impacted only by Alternative 3, whereas the latter will be impacted by Alternatives 1, 2 and 3.) Data recovery excavations at 5LP5949 and 5LP6665 prior to construction of the Preferred Alternative, as necessary and appropriate, are recommended as the most beneficial way to mitigate the adverse effects.

The SHPO has also concurred that the proposed effects to the NRHP eligible Twin Rocks Community Ditch (5LP2580) will not be adverse, as this resource has been extensively documented and the project will not alter its physical integrity.

Please note that the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) has requested that any prehistoric archaeological sites on tribally owned lands that have been determined not eligible for the NRHP, and that will be disturbed during construction, be monitored by a qualified archaeologist during the initial stages of earth disturbance. Once the Preferred Alternative is selected, a list of the sites to be monitored will be assembled and these actions coordinated with SUIT, as well as your office. Also enclosed is a transmittal letter to Byron Frost, Lands Division Head in the SUIT Natural Resources Department, regarding the effects issue; CDOT and FHWA have been coordinating primarily with Mr. Frost about archaeological issues related to the project.

Please contact me with questions or concerns regarding the effects determination.

Enclosures

cc: B. Mutaw (URS Corp.)  
CF

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



August 4, 2004

Ms. Theresa G. Cuch, Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Southern Ute Agency  
P.O. Box 315  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Dear Ms. Cuch:

**SUBJECT:** Revised Alternative Alignment Maps in Relation to Archaeological Sites, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, US Highway 550 Environmental Assessment

Enclosed for your files are updated engineering plan sheets showing the alignment alternatives proposed for the highway project referenced above in relation to known archaeological sites. As you are aware, the project entails improvements to a 15.75-mile segment of US Highway 550 from the New Mexico state line north to Farmington Hill in La Plata County, all of which is within the external boundary of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. At the June 23, 2004 meeting in Durango regarding cultural resources issues on the project, which you attended, a consensus was reached regarding the need to relocate the National Register-eligible archaeological sites along each of the three US 550 alignment alternatives, and to survey those locations such that they could be accurately plotted on alternatives maps. That task was undertaken and completed shortly thereafter, and the results appear on the enclosures.

As a result of the survey, it is clear that only two archaeological sites (5LP5949, 5LP6665) will be impacted by one or more of the highway alternatives; the remainder can be avoided during all phases of construction. Both of these sites, as well as others along the corridor, are reflected in red on the maps. CDOT has recently sent the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, via Byron Frost in the Natural Resources Department, additional correspondence related to effects to these sites as a result of the eventual highway construction. Based on a recent telephone conversation with Clara Piccoli in the SUIT Permitting and Right-of-Way office, it is my understanding that copies of these documents will be forwarded to you directly by the tribe.

If you have questions regarding the enclosed maps and/or the issue of effects to the archaeological sites, please contact me in Denver at (303)757-9631.

Sincerely,

Dan Jepson  
Senior Staff Archaeologist

Enclosures

cc: J. Holst (CDOT Region 5 Env., w/o enclosure)  
C. Piccoli (SUIT ROW Coordinator, w/o enclosure)  
CF

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80222  
(303) 757-9259



March 31, 2005

Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Colorado Historical Society  
1300 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Determinations of Effect, CDOT Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango, La Plata County

Dear Ms. Contiguglia:

This letter constitutes the Federal Highway Administration and Colorado Department of Transportation's Determination of Effect for historic resources associated with the project referenced above. The undertaking involves improvements to an 15.75-mile segment of US Highway 550 between the New Mexico state line and the top of Farmington Hill south of Durango in La Plata County. We consulted with you regarding Determinations of Eligibility in November 2002 and again in May 2003; eligibility and effects determinations for archaeological resources related to the project were submitted to you separately in 2002 and 2004.

Three previously-recorded and eighteen newly-recorded historic properties were identified during the field survey. In correspondence dated May 16, 2003 and August 8, 2003, you concurred with our determination that none of the properties are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). We have attached copies of the previous correspondence for your convenience. Because there are no NRHP-eligible properties, the project will result in *no historic properties affected*.

We hereby request your concurrence with this Determination of Effect. Your response is necessary for FHWA's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you require additional information, please contact CDOT Senior Staff Historian Lisa Schoch at (303) 512-4258.

Very truly yours,

  
Brad Beckham, Manager  
Environmental Programs Branch

### Enclosures

Correspondence dated: Nov. 14, 2002, May 16, 2003, May 29, 2003, Aug. 8, 2003

cc: Jon Holst, CDOT Region 5 ✓  
File/CF/RF



COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137

April 6, 2005

Brad Beckham  
Manager, Environmental Programs Branch  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
Department of Transportation  
Environmental Programs Branch  
4201 East Arkansas Avenue  
Denver, CO 80222

Re: CDOT Project NH 5501-011, New Mexico State Line to Durango, La Plata Co.  
(CHS #39793)

Dear Mr. Beckham,

Thank you for your correspondence dated March 31, 2005 and received by our office on April 4, 2005 regarding the above-mentioned project.

After review of the submitted information, we concur with the finding of *no historic properties affected* under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.4(d)(1)) for the proposed undertaking.

If unidentified archaeological resources are discovered during construction, work must be interrupted until the resources have been evaluated in terms of the National Register criteria, 36 CFR 60.4, in consultation with this office.

We request being involved in the consultation process with the local government, which as stipulated in 36 CFR 800.3 is required to be notified of the undertaking, and with other consulting parties. Additional information provided by the local government or consulting parties might cause our office to re-evaluate our eligibility and potential effect findings.

Please note that our compliance letter does not end the 30-day review period provided to other consulting parties.

If we may be of further assistance, please contact Amy Pallante, our Section 106 Compliance Coordinator, at (303) 866-4678.

Sincerely,

for  
Georgianna Contiguglia  
State Historic Preservation Officer



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

12300 W. Dakota Ave., Ste. 180  
Lakewood, CO 80228

June 22, 2005

Colorado Federal Aid Division

Mr. Clement J. Frost  
Chairman  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box 737 / 356 Ouray Drive  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Dear Mr. Frost:

Subject: Draft Environmental Assessment for Highway US550 - Safety  
Improvements Between Durango and the New Mexico State Line

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Region 5 of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) are requesting a special session of Tribal Council on July 13 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. to present to you our internal working draft of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to improve a portion of Highway US 550 between Durango and the New Mexico State Line.

We have coordinated with members of your staff during the preparation of the draft and would like to present to Council, at this time, a description of the proposed highway improvements and the EA document. Enclosed for your review is a summary of the proposed project, including a summary of the impacts to Tribal lands and mitigation. A copy of the entire document has been forwarded to your resource staff for review and comment. The document is scheduled to be finalized and released to the public on July 19, 2005.

To preserve the integrity of our internal review process, we request that you not release the preliminary document to the public prior to our scheduled release to the public. The FHWA is working with CDOT to finalize the EA document for public release. After the document is approved for public release, you will receive additional copies for Tribal members to review and comment.



We look forward to working with Council and your staff to address any comments you may have on the document, and to moving ahead with this project that will benefit travelers of Highway US 550. Please feel free to contact Joe Duran of my office (720) 963-3006 if you have additional questions. Richard Reynolds, (970) 385-1404, and Kerrie Neet, (970) 385-1430, of CDOT, are also available for any questions.

Sincerely,

  
for David A. Nicol, P.E.  
Division Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Richard Reynolds, CDOT Region 5 Transportation Director  
Keith Powers, CDOT Region 5 Program Engineer  
Kerrie Neet, CDOT Region 5 Environmental/Planning Manager  
Joe Duran, Federal Highway Administration

Follow-up to Letter from FHWA to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe,  
dated June 22, 2005

No written comments were received back from the Tribe.

FHWA and CDOT presented the US 550 Environmental Assessment  
to the Tribal Council on July 13, 2005.

21711025

# STATE OF COLORADO

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Region 5 - Engineering  
3803 North Main Avenue, Suite 300  
Durango, Colorado 81301

(970) 385-1400  
Fax (970) 385-1410



December 22, 1998

NH (CX) 550-1(005)  
N.M. State Line North  
Project # 93084

Colorado Division of Wildlife  
711 Independence Ave.  
Grand Junction, CO 81505

Attention: Mr. Mike Grode

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 40 Programmatic Certification for U.S. 550-N.M. State Line North

Dear Mr. Grode

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is completing environmental documentation for a highway improvement/safety project on 3.5 miles of U.S. 550 immediately north of the Colorado/New Mexico state line. The potential for SB40 to be jurisdictional in relation to the Animas River and associated streams has been addressed by the project biological consultant, Dames & Moore, by determining if fish and/or wildlife habitat of stream systems would be affected by construction.

A number of intermittent streams cross U.S. 550 within the project area (see attached Figure 1). Two of the more significant drainage systems are dry washes that cross the highway in Section 18 (Station 51+980), and in Section 19 (Station 50+960). These drainage channels carry water only during storm run-off. Bridges and box culverts will be used to maintain flows under the highway. Existing quality of any flows that occur from storm runoff would be maintained after construction, and erosion control measures will be implemented during construction to minimize sedimentation effects.

Wetland losses of 1.34 acre that are predicted from road construction are primarily non stream-related, and will be offset through a wetland mitigation plan that reestablishes existing wetland functions to the extent possible. Most of the impacted wetlands have developed along the highway barrow ditches and function to improve water quality from pavement runoff and hillside drainage from the west. Storm water management and wetland mitigation plans have been developed for this project. An Army Corps of Engineers 404 nationwide permit notification will be provided for impacts related to wetlands.

Page 2 of 2

The conclusion from our analysis is that this project will not have impacts on the Animas River or associated streams requiring an application for SB40 certification, and therefore, the project should be granted Programmatic SB 40 Certification consistent with the joint CDOT/Division of Wildlife Memorandum of Agreement.

Please contact me at 970-385-1433 if you have questions on this notification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wallace R. Jacobson".

Wallace R. Jacobson  
CDOT Region 5, Environmental Specialist

Attachment

Cc: Mike Perino, CDOT Program Engineer  
Steve Lewis, CDOT Resident Engineer  
Joe Audino, CDOT Project Engineer  
Carl Watson, CDOT Planning/Environmental Manager  
Bryan Foote, URS Greiner Project Engineer  
Project File via W. Jacobson



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services  
Colorado Field Office  
755 Parfet Street, Suite 361  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

IN REPLY REFER TO:

ES/CO:T&E  
Mail Stop 65412

OCT - 3 2001

**RECEIVED**

OCT 0 5 2001

Carl Watson  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
3803 North Main Avenue  
Durango, Colorado 81301

COLORADO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
REGION 5  
PROGRAM ENGINEER

Dear Mr. Watson,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received your letter of August 27, 2001, regarding the State Highway 550 between Durango and the New Mexico State Line improvement project. The project area is in La Plata County (Townships 32 - 34 North, Ranges 9 and 10 West). You requested a list of Federal endangered and threatened species that may exist in the project area. These comments have been prepared under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.).

The Service has no specific knowledge of the project site; however, following is a list of Federal endangered, threatened, proposed and candidate species for La Plata County, which may be used as a basis for determining species potentially present in the project area. While other species could occur at or visit the project area, endangered or threatened species most likely to occur include:

- Birds:** Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), Endangered  
Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Threatened  
Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), Threatened
- Mammals:** Black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), Endangered  
Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Threatened
- Fishes:** Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Threatened (Please note that any water depletions to the San Juan River drainage may affect this species.)  
Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), Threatened (Please note that any water depletions to the San Juan River drainage may affect this species.)
- Plants:** Knowlton's cactus (*Pediocactus knowltonii*), Endangered
- Invertebrates:** Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly (*Boloria acrocneuma*), Endangered

The Service also is interested in the protection of species which are candidates for official listing as threatened or endangered (Federal Register, Vol. 61, No. 40, February 28, 1996). While these species presently have no legal protection under the ESA, it is within the spirit of this Act to consider project impacts to potentially sensitive candidate species. It is the intention of the Service to protect these species before human-related activities adversely impact their habitat to a degree that they would need to be listed and, therefore, protected under the ESA. Additionally, we wish to make you aware of the presence of Federal candidates should any be proposed or

SH550, Species List

Page 2

listed prior to the time that all Federal actions related to the project are completed. If any candidate species will be unavoidably impacted, appropriate mitigation should be proposed and discussed with this office.

No candidate species are expected to occur in or visit the project area.

If the Service can be of further assistance, contact Alison Deans Michael of this office at (303) 275-2370.

Sincerely,



LeRoy W. Carlson  
Colorado Field Supervisor

pc: CDOT (J. Powell)  
Michael

Ref:Alison\CDOT2001\Reg5



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services  
Colorado Field Office  
755 Parfet Street, Suite 361  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

**RECEIVED**

IN REPLY REFER TO:

ES/CO:T&E  
Mail Stop 65412

DEC 12 2003

DEC 15 2003

COLORADO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
REGION 5  
PROGRAM ENGINEER

Kerrie Neet  
Colorado Department of Transportation  
3803 North Main Avenue  
Durango, Colorado 81301

Dear Ms. Neet,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received your letter of November 5, 2003, requesting an update of the list of Federally threatened and endangered species in the area of the proposed widening and reconstruction of U.S. Highway 550 (US550) south of Durango, La Plata County, Colorado, to the New Mexico State line. These comments have been prepared under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.).

Since your original request, dated August 27, 2001, the yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) has been added to the Federal list of candidate species in your project area. The remainder of the species listed in our response are unchanged.

If the Service can be of further assistance, contact Alison Deans Michael of this office at (303) 275-2370.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Linner  
Colorado Field Supervisor

pc: CDOT (J. Peterson)  
Michael

Ref: Alison\CDOT2003\Reg5

xc: Holt  
Blanchard/URS



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, SACRAMENTO  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
1325 J STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814-2922  
June 28, 2001

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

Project #:	O:	CC:	CIR
REYNOLDS			
PERINO			
WATSON			
BEVELLEN			
DEWING			
AUDINO			
JACOBSON			
STUFFLEBEAM			
BELLER			

Regulatory Branch (200175242)

MARK MEHALKO ✓  
BRYAN FORTE ✓  
MINDY STECKMEST ✓  
SARAJANE MCELLENAN ✓

Mr. Bill Killam  
URS  
8181 East Tufts Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80237

CDOT Project  
FC-NH(CX)160-2(048) FILE 67-00042513  
Sub: 91050

Dear Mr. Killam:

We understand that the Colorado Department of Transportation is undertaking an Environmental Assessment for the improvement of approximately 17 miles of US 550 between the New Mexico state line and US 160 in La Plata County, Colorado. This letter is in response to your request for comments concerning two potential corridors that were reviewed during the June 14, 2001, agency scoping meeting and field tour.

As indicated in your May 22, 2001 letter, CDOT's 1999 Feasibility Study recommended construction of a new highway along the current US 550 corridor (the "Existing US 550 Corridor"). The other corridor being considered (the "Animas River Corridor") generally follows La Posta Road. Although both corridors would result in impacts to waters of the U.S., the Animas River Corridor would include construction of a new roadway through broad floodplain/wetland areas adjacent to the Animas River, three new crossings of the Animas River, and would apparently result in destruction of suitable habitat for the Southwestern willow flycatcher, a federally Endangered species.

As you know, the 404(b)(1) guidelines require that the Corps permit only the least damaging, practicable alternative. Based on the information provided and our field review of the two corridors, it appears that the Animas River Corridor would not be the least damaging practicable alternative.

We will work with CDOT and its consultants to ensure that the roadway alignment and design will avoid and minimize impacts to Waters of the U.S. to the maximum extent practicable. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at the Durango Regulatory Office, 278 Sawyer Drive, #1, Durango, Colorado 81303, telephone (970) 375-9452.

Sincerely,  
*Lesley McWhirter*  
Lesley McWhirter  
Regulatory Project Manager