Form 10-306

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON: Narrow Gauge Trestle of D&RG Crossing the Cimarron
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: N.E. of Cimarron
CITY OR TOWN: Cimarron

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)
☐ District ☐ Building ☞ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

OWNERSHIP ☞ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both

STATUS ☛ In Process ☛ Being Considered

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC ☛ Yes: ☛ Restricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
☐ Agricultural ☛ Government ☛ Park ☛ Transportation ☛ Other (Specify)
☐ Commercial ☛ Industrial ☛ Private Residence ☛ Unoccupied ☛ Unrestricted
☐ Educational ☛ Military ☛ Religious ☛ Preservation work in progress
☐ Entertainment ☛ Museum ☛ Scientific

4. AGENCY

United States Government - Bureau of Reclamation (also SEE OVER:
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Montrose County Courthouse

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

CITY OR TOWN: Montrose
STATE: Colorado

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
☐ Federal ☐ State ☛ County ☛ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:
The original bridge as designed and constructed was 288 feet in length consisting of four spans. The west end span and the two east spans were deck girder construction. The remaining span was a decked Pratt truss. All the spans were salvaged from other bridges on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and modified for this structure. All were originally fabricated in the early 1880's.

The three girder spans consist of a deck supported on two built up riveted steel girders. The deck supporting the rails was constructed with 8-inch by 12-inch by 12-foot fir cross ties spaced at 16-inch centers resting directly on the two girders. The girders were built up from steel plate and angle with riveted connections. The two girders were spaced 10 feet on centers and cross-braced.

The only span remaining in place is the 119-foot decked Pratt truss. This span consists of two pin-connected Pratt trusses with eight 14-foot 11-inch panels. The depth between chords is 19 feet 6 inches. The two trusses are spaced 12 feet on centers and connected at panel points with transverse built up girders and cross-bracing. The transverse girders support two 15-inch I-beam stringers which in turn support the deck. The chords and posts for the trusses are built up using channels back to back and diagonals are steel rods. The end posts of the trusses rest on piers using expansion shoes. The deck consists of 8-inch by 8-inch by 14-foot fir cross ties at 16-inch centers supported by the two stringers and top chord of the trusses.

The west abutment was cut into solid rock and the east abutment was constructed of stone masonry. The three intermediate piers were also constructed of stone masonry.

So far, a search of all available literature has not located a single picture which shows the bridge as it was while in use. However, the area has a complete set of "as built" prints of the bridge.

The longest span of the bridge, one bent, and two piers are all that were saved from the scrappers.

This span and piers are in very good condition, although some damage has resulted from rolling road ballast on the south end of the span.

See attached "Technical Information for Special Engineering Structures" for additional descriptive information.

NOTE: The National Park Service administers this area per Memorandum of Agreement, dated 02/11/1965, between the Service and the Bureau of Reclamation.
This remaining span of the narrow gauge bridge crossing the Cimarron River is just upstream of the confluence of the Gunnison and Cimarron Rivers.

The bridge was one of three that was necessary to get the trains through the Black Canyon and out at Cimarron. All of the spans, except for this remaining one, were removed or covered by water.

The bridge is noteworthy because of its particular construction and workmanship (see description) and because it also represents one of the last remnants of an engineering and construction feat of outstanding ingenuity and tenacity of men trying to invade the mighty maze of the Rocky Mountains to seek the riches these mountains held.

Except for the two short sections of narrow gauge still operating in Colorado and New Mexico, most of the abandoned narrow gauge routes are reverting back to the natural scene. Only a trained or experienced eye can still detect these routes.

Tied into this section of the Black Canyon route is the entire story of the dramatic race to find a way west, the fastest and best, encouraged by land grants from the U.S. Government. The race started with the epic survey led by Captain Gunnison and ended only after major transcontinental routes were established.

The time between the original surveys and completion makes some of the most dramatic pages of U.S. History. During this history, fortunes were built and lost and untold lives were influenced by these railroads. In fact, no facet of either man or nature will ever be the same again.

Bridge 259, or what remains of it, is a landmark that stands starkly against the rugged rocks of the Black Canyon; a quiet but living page of history during one of the nation’s most eventful times. This bridge as it stands now, is comprised of two piers (one bent) and one span, but in its rugged setting it creates a wonderful link with the past.

To complement the bridge the National Park Service and the town of Montrose have placed one of the engines from this run and a caboose which was also used on this run, plus a boxcar of the same vintage (but not used on this particular run) on the bridge.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lucius Beebe & Charles Clegg Narrow Gauge in the Rockies (Berkeley, 1958) pp. 12-22
B. H. Bryant - Report of Survey dated March 17, 1883, ms in records of the
Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Denver, 1880-84, pp. 393-98

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY
OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107° 32' 55&quot;</td>
<td>38° 27' 06&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than One Acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE
|-------|------|---------|------

STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE
|-------|------|---------|------

STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE
|-------|------|---------|------

STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE
|-------|------|---------|------

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Karl T. Gilbert, General Superintendent
BUSINESS ADDRESS: Colorado West Group, National Park Service
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 1648
CITY OR TOWN: Montrose
STATE: Colorado

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:
☑ Yes
☐ No
☐ None

State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is ☐ National ☑ State
☐ Local

Federal Representative Signature

Federal Representative

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register
Summary and Conclusion: The building of the Denver and Rio Grande main line was one of the most important historical events in the region of the Gunnison River. The route from Gunnison to Cimarron closely adhered to the upper canyons of the Gunnison River and in so doing left its tracks within the proposed boundaries of Curecanti Recreation Area. It is to be regretted that almost the entire extent of the roadbed is today submerged deep beneath the reservoir waters backed up by Blue Mesa and Morrow Point Dams. Furthermore, the greatest part of Curecanti Needle is undated, although its uppermost point will continue to be seen. The road constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation from the town of Cimarron down along Cimarron Creek to the Morrow Point Dam overlays the roadbed of the Denver and Rio Grande. One trestle which crossed the Cimarron along this short route, (Illustration No. 10), is all that remains of the railroad within the Recreation Area except, possibly, for a few short stretches of the roadbed just below each of the upper two dams and along the Gunnison at the eastern terminus of the Recreation Area boundary where the river is still free flowing. Long stretches of the roadbed can be seen switch-backing across U. S. Route 50 across Cerro Summit between Montrose and Cimarron.

Taken from Benjamin Levy's "Curecanti Recreation Area, Colorado Historical Background Study, October 15, 1968" National Park Service
Narrow Gauge Trestle of D&RG Crossing the Cimarron

**LOCATION**

City, Town: Cimarron

County: Montrose

State: Colorado

**PHOTO REFERENCE**

Photo Credit: Montrose, Colorado

Date of Photo: July 22, 1974

**IDENTIFICATION**

Describe view, direction, etc. If district, give building name & street

Side view of bridge with narrow gauge display in place - Looking northwest.
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

NAME

HISTORIC

Narrow Gauge Trestle of D&RG Crossing the Cimarron

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN  Cimarron  
VICINITY OF

COUNTY  Montrose  
STATE  Colorado

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

DATE OF PHOTO  June 20, 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT  Montrose, Colorado

IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

North end of Bridge - completed track.

PHOTO NO  20f2
CIMARRON, COLO.
N38°22'.5-W107°30'/7.5
1956

Latitude 55°
107° 32' 06"

Longitude
38° 27' 06"