



History Colorado

March 16, 2026

Charlotte Graveline
Historian
National Park Service
Park History Program
Historic Preservation Services

Preliminary Property Evaluation for the Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residence Area at Colorado National Monument. .

Dear Charlotte,

Based on the preliminary review by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, we have determined that the above-named property appears to meet the criteria for evaluation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as a district. The district is eligible under Criterion A for Politics and Government in relation to the Mission 66 movement.

In 2024, the National Park Service issues a Multiple Property Documentation Form Reference Guide for Mission 66 Era Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. According to this guide, the Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residence Area does meet the requirements for the National Register program. Specifically, the above-named property meets all the Mission 66 character defining features highlighted in the resource guide. For reference, see page 11 for more information on residential historic districts. While we agree that each resource is not historic individually, we do see that all these resources meet the requirements for Mission 66 as defined by the National Park Service.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 720.262.1042 or e-mail me at damion.pechota@state.co.us. We appreciate your interest in historic preservation and look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Damion Pechota
Senior National and State Register Historian

Enclosed: Mission 66 Era Resources MPDF Reference Guide

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

Historic Cultural Landscapes

This form, modeled on the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) Short Format History Template, is intended to aid in documenting the identification and evaluation of many types of historical landscapes in Colorado, including historic archaeological landscapes. For guidance on completing this form and the required accompanying documentation (maps, photos), please refer to the instructions found at www.historycolorado.org/archaeologists/cultural-resource-forms and to the *Colorado Cultural Resources Survey Manual* at www.historycolorado.org/archaeologists/survey-manual. Prehistoric archaeological landscapes should still be recorded on the *OAHP Management Data Form* (#1400) and the appropriate component forms. Historic linear landscape features (ditches, roads, railroads, etc. in whole or part) documented independently of the surrounding landscape context during archaeological surveys should still be recorded on the *OAHP Management Data Form* (#1400), accompanied by the *OAHP Linear Component Form* (#1418). Post-World War II Subdivisions should be recorded on OAHP form #1403 b.

IDENTIFICATION

Property name: Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area * historic * current ☐ otherResource Count: 5 buildings 1 structures objects 3 sitesOwnership: * federal ☐ state ☐ city ☐ county ☐ private ☐ unknown

Owner(s) contact info: US Government, Colorado National Monument, 1750 Rim Rock Drive, Fruita, CO 81521

Previously recorded resources associated with property (*provide list of OAHP site numbers*):5ME.21284, 5ME.21285, 5ME.21286, 5ME.21287, 5ME.21288, 5ME.04827, 5ME.24105,
5ME.24107

LOCATION

Street Address: Colorado National Monument

Municipality: Fruita * vicinity

USGS quad (7.5'): Colorado National Monument year: 1975

Parcel number: N/AParcel information: Lot(s): N/A Block: N/AAcreage: 12.4 * actual ☐ estimatedPLSS information: Principal Meridian 6th Township 11S Range 102WNE ¼ of ¼ of ¼ of ¼ of section 13Boundary Description and Justification: * historic ☐ legal ☐ other _____
please note that boundary on accompanying location map should conform to boundary as described

The Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area boundary begins at the intersection of the Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road with Rim Rock Drive, runs southwest to the edge of the Saddlehorn Utility Area National Register Historic District (NRHD), then follows the northeast and northwest boundaries of the Saddlehorn Utility Area NRHD. The boundary then cuts north to the base of the sandstone cliffs immediately west of the Utility and Residential areas. It follows the 5,800 ft contour line due north to the north edge of the Residential Area, runs northeast for approximately 100 ft to the west edge of Rim Rock Drive, and follows Rim Rock Drive due southeast to return to the starting point. The boundary corresponds to the extent of the area developed by the NPS for staff housing from 1957 to 1962. It is adjacent to but does not include the Saddlehorn Utility Area NRHD, which was developed by the CCC for the NPS from 1937 to 1941.

DESCRIPTION (*address all applicable features; include alterations and dates, when known*)

Natural Features

Topography: Open mesa

Vegetation (include seasonal changes): Semi-desert; native dwarfed pinyon, juniper, and sagebrush woodlands; sparse Utah serviceberry, mountain mahogany, and fendlerbush shrublands

Water: Seeps and springs

Geology: Natural sandstone formations and paleobiotic soil crust

Official eligibility determination
(OAHP use only)

Date _____ Initials _____

- ☐ Determined Eligible- NR
☐ Determined Not Eligible- NR
☐ Determined Eligible- SR
☐ Determined Not Eligible- SR
☐ Need Data
☐ Eligible NR District -- contributing
☐ Eligible NR District -- noncontributing

Cultural Landscape
ClassificationSite or DistrictHistoric Designed Landscape

or

Historic Vernacular Landscape

or

Ethnographic Landscape

Type of Landscape

- ☐ Garden (private)
☐ Park (public)
☐ Green/Common/Plaza

☐ Boulevard/Parkway/Trail
☐ Other Transportation

☐ Agricultural
☐ Exhibition/Fairgrounds

☐ Mine/Quarry
☐ Other Industrial

☐ Campus
☐ Sports/Recreation

☐ Cemetery
☐ Commemorative/Memorial

☐ Residential Subdivision (other than Post-World War II)
☐ Office Park

☐ Traditional Cultural Property (TCP)

☐ Natural Landform or other Geological Formation

☐ Other (please specify):
National Park Service
Developed Area

Ecology: Wildlife includes lizards; canyon treefrog and Great Basin spadefoot; raptors; bats; white-tailed jackrabbits, desert cottontails, rock squirrels, kangaroo rats, and porcupines; coyotes, kit foxes, gray foxes, black bears, ringtails, badgers, spotted skunks, striped skunks, mountain lions, and bobcats. Environmental hazards include wildland fire.

Climate: Semi-arid and exposed; average annual precipitation 11 inches; average snowfall 32 inches in December and January; average summer temperatures 90°F, winter temperatures between 20°F and 37°F

Designed / Cultural Features

Land Use patterns: Small yards and utility areas, parking

Planting patterns: None

Boundary demarcations: Wood and chain-link fences, sandstone boulder retaining walls, natural vegetation, and topography

Spatial organization/layout: Functional

Circulation networks: Asphalt roads and driveways, concrete walkways

Views and vistas: Expansive views of natural setting

Water features (functional and ornamental): None

Buildings, Structures, Objects:*

1 – Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road: Asphalt road from Rim Rock Drive to and through area

2 – Residence #37 (5ME.21284): One-story, wood-frame ranch house with attached garage and rear integral porch

3 – Residence #40 (5ME.21285): One-story, wood-frame ranch house with attached garage and rear integral porch

4 – Residence #42 (5ME.21286): One-story, wood-frame ranch house with attached garage and rear integral porch

5 – Building #43 (5ME.21288): One-story, wood-frame ranch apartment building with four units, boiler room, and laundry room

6 – Building #51 (5ME.21287): One-story, wood-frame ranch duplex with two attached garages

Small-scale elements (markers, statuary, site furnishings, etc.): None

Other (including ephemeral qualities – sounds, activities, wildlife, smells, etc.): None

*list and briefly describe; attach Architectural Inventory Form (#1403) for each major resource

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Location: ☒ original ☐ moved date(s) moved: _____

Development date(s): 1957–1962 ☐ estimated ☒ actual source: NPS Completion Reports

Designer(s) / builder(s): NPS Western Office of Design and Construction / Harold L. Wright Construction and Lyall E. Coulter

☐ attributed ☒ documented source: NPS Completion Reports

Developmental history and evolution: *identify changes to landscape over time (additions, alterations, boundary alterations, demolitions):*

The Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area was built by the NPS between 1957 and 1962. Alterations to the landscape since 1962 are minimal and consist of modifications to the drying yards adjacent to each residence and the addition of propane tanks and chain-link fencing. There have been no demolitions in the area.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Original/historic use: Domestic/Institutional Housing

Current use: Domestic/Institutional Housing and Government/Government Offices

Historical Background/Overview (identify sources of information):

The Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area was one of the projects undertaken at Colorado National Monument as part of the 10-year NPS-wide improvement project known as Mission 66 (1956–1966), which addressed deferred maintenance and increased visitation at national parks across the country. To address the need for additional housing for law enforcement, maintenance, and limited seasonal staff in the Monument, the 1956 Mission 66 prospectus developed by Monument staff proposed housing and ranger stations at the Grand Junction (east) entrance and single- and multi-family housing at the Saddlehorn Headquarters area. Ultimately, two single-family residences and a utility building were constructed at the east entrance area (only the utility building is extant); and three single-family houses (Residence #s 37, 40, and 42), a four-unit apartment building (Building #43), and a duplex (Building #51) were constructed near the 1930s Saddlehorn Utility Area. The Saddlehorn Maintenance Road/Residence Road was extended north from the Utility Area to access the housing.

In June 1957, local contractor Harold L. Wright (1917–1957) was awarded a \$71,305.50 contract to build the three single-family residences, sewer systems, and access road at the Saddlehorn Residential Area, all designed by a team of architects and landscape architects at the NPS Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC). Work began on June 10, 1957, and was completed by November 15 of that same year. Work stopped from August 6 to August 27 due to the death of Harold Wright. His widow, Marjorie Wright, took over management of the project, and Glen Brown worked as Mrs. Wright's foreman. Lyall E. Coulter (1901–1975) of Grand Junction built the four-unit apartment building and the duplex at the Saddlehorn Residential Area from July to December 1962. The NPS continues to use Residence #37 and Building #s 43 and 51 as staff housing but converted Residence #s 40 and 42 to staff offices about 2008.

Three archeological sites in this area (Sites 5ME.04827, 5ME.24105, and 5ME.24107) were identified between 1984 and 2003 as part of spatially limited compliance projects. A Class III archeological survey of the area was completed in 2022 as part of an NPS project to reduce fuel loads and create defensible spaces around park infrastructure, and the previously recorded sites were revisited and reassessed. The archeological investigations included a review of previously recorded archeological site information and a pedestrian survey around the Utility Area and housing. The 2022 assessment noted it was likely that all the Native American (and some of the historic-period) artifacts located around and adjacent to standing structures have been disturbed to some degree by cutting and filling associated with the building construction. Site components located away from the structures, especially on the bench to the east of the housing area, likely remain intact and undisturbed.

Sources:

Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, "Wright Wins Contract for Monument Houses," June 8, 1957, 4.

"Duplex Residence – Headquarters Area – Colorado National Monument" (NM COLO-3144), US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, W.O.D.C., 1962. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

"Employees Residences (3), No. 37, 40 & 42 – Utility Area – Colorado National Monument" (NM COLO-3101-A), US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Western Office – Division of Design & Construction, 1957. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

"4 Units Seasonal Apartments – Headquarters Area – Colorado National Monument" (NM COLO-3140-A), US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, W.O.D.C., 1962. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

Carr, Ethan, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Len Warner, Rodd L. Wheaton, John D. Feinberg, and Carly M. Piccarello, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources*, 2015.

Grotjohn, Adam J., Katy Perrier, and Natalie Pope, *A Class III Archeological Inventory: Defensible Spaces Buffer Around Structures, Colorado National Monument, Mesa County, Colorado*. Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service Intermountain Region Archeology Program, 2022.

NPS Completion Report, "Construction of 3 Residences," R. Neil Grunigen, Project Supervisor, December 3, 1957. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

NPS Completion Report, "Employee Apts., One 4-Unit, Saddlehorn Area," 1964. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

NPS Completion Report, "Employee Residence, 2-Unit Duplex, Saddlehorn Area," 1964. On file, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO.

NPS, *Mission 66 Master Plan, Colorado National Monument, 3 Vols.* Fruita, CO: Colorado National Monument, 1961.

HISTORIC CONTEXT EVALUATION*

Name of Historic Context: National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources MPDF: Park Employee Housing

Area(s) of significance: Community Planning and Development, Architecture, Landscape Architecture

Significant Person(s): None

Period(s) of significance: 1945–1972

Significant Date(s): _____

Level of significance: ☐ National ☐ State ☒ Local

Discuss presence or absence of character-defining features needed to convey significance within this context:

The development of the Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area included very little alteration of the natural landscape. The following character-defining features of Mission 66 development are present: a curvilinear road; angled siting of the buildings to provide residential privacy; low-profile, horizontal massing of the buildings; standard residential designs produced by the NPS; and standard driveways, walkways, and patios associated with Mission 66 employee housing.

Landscape retains Integrity of: ☒ location ☒ setting ☒ design ☒ materials ☒ workmanship ☒ association ☒ feeling

Discuss presence or absence of integrity within this context: The landscape retains all aspects of integrity to the period of significance for Mission 66 resources. There have been no alterations to the setting, spatial relationships, boundary, topography and grading, design intent, and circulation system in the area. There have been minimal alterations to the vegetation, site furnishings, and architectural features.

ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Existing designation? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Individual property ☐ District

Designated property or district name:

Designating authority:

Designation date: _____

If the property is within the boundaries of an existing designated district, is it: ☐ Contributing ☐ Noncontributing

Individual site: ☐ Eligible ☐ Not Eligible ☐ Needs Data

Applicable NR Criteria: A B C D Applicable Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Applicable SR Criteria: A B C D E

Summary:

Potential district: ☐ Eligible ☒ Not Eligible ☐ Needs Data

Applicable NR Criteria: A B C D Applicable Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Applicable SR Criteria: A B C D E

Summary: The Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area was built between 1945 and 1972 as a component of the Mission 66 development program at Colorado National Monument and retains overall integrity. However, the Mission 66 program was not the first development campaign at the Monument or a major redevelopment campaign that drastically altered or reorganized the public experience of the Monument. The program provided the means for improvements to the Monument's infrastructure that built upon the framework of earlier planning efforts. As a representative example of a common property type developed by the NPS at multiple parks under the Mission 66 program, the Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area does not meet the registration guidelines for a park employee housing district outlined in the National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources MPDF (Carr et al. 2015). The five houses in the area were not prototypes for the standard NPS employee housing designs or unique designs with architectural distinction, and the area's site design is not unique. The conversion of two of the houses to administrative offices detracts from the area's cohesiveness as a residential enclave. The area is adjacent to the earlier Saddlehorn Utility Area NRHD but is clearly separated from it by topography and vegetative screening and conveys different feelings and associations.

If there is NR district potential, itemize contributing and non-contributing resources: N/A

RECORDING INFORMATION

Survey date: June 4, 2024

Associated Report: N/A

Photo log:

Photo 1. Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area, view north from Water Tank Road/Black Ridge Trail with Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road near foreground. Visible from left to right: Saddlehorn Utility Area Historic District, Building #51, Building #43, Residence #42, Residence #40, Residence #37, and Rim Rock Drive.

Photo 2. Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road, view southwest. Visible from left to right: Residence #40, Residence #42, and Building #51.

Photo 3. Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road, view northeast toward Residence #40.

Photo 4. Residence #37, view northeast.

Photo 5. Residence #40, view east.

Photo 6. Residence #42, view east.

Photo 7. Building #51, view southwest.

Photo 8. Building #43, view southeast.

Surveyed by (include contact info):

Laura Kline, Holly Herbster, and Jill Miller with The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL)

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(401) 728-8780

Project sponsor (include contact info):

National Park Service

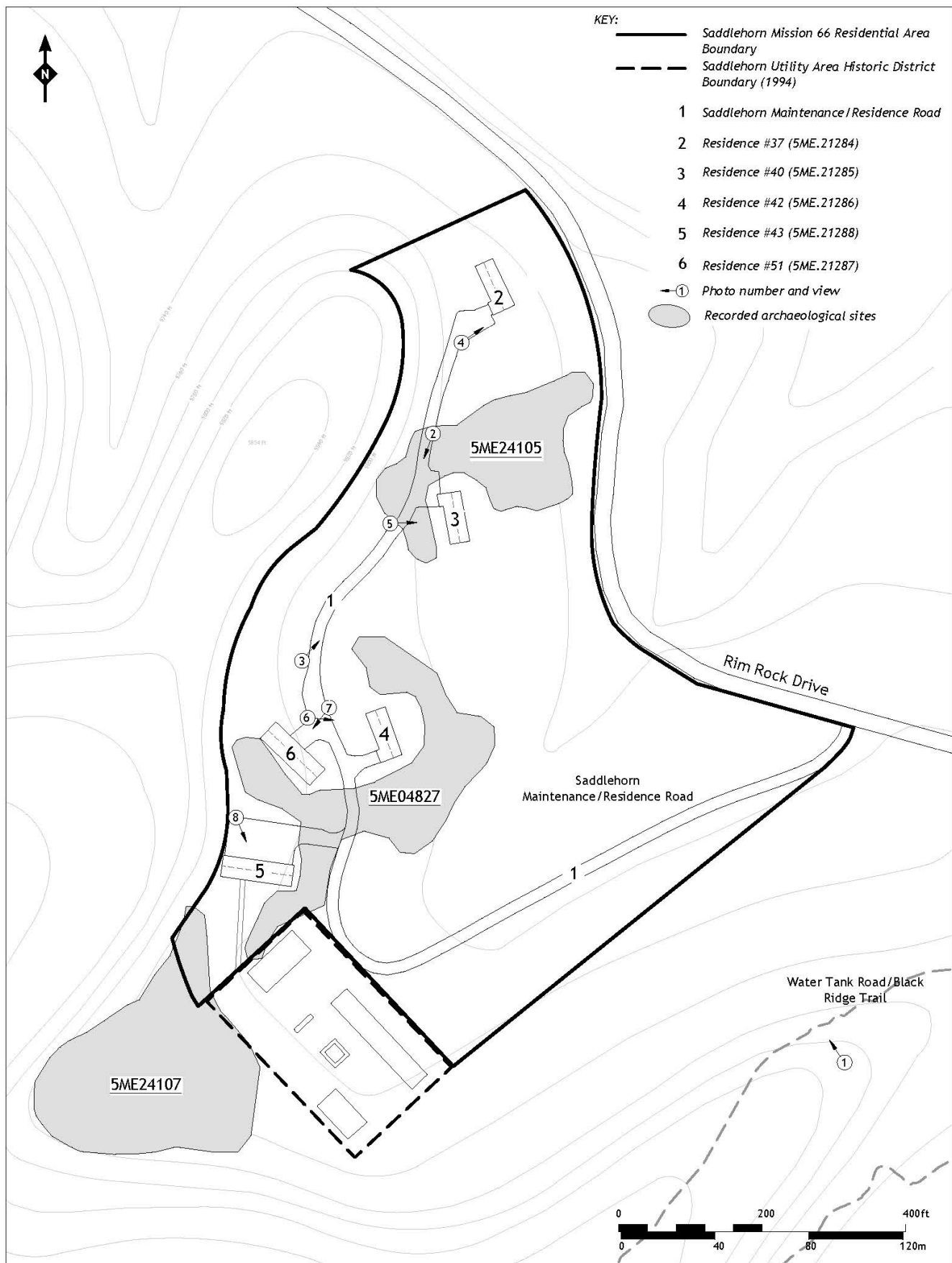
Jessica Resnik, Chief of Resources, Colorado National Monument

1750 Rim Rock Drive, Fruita, CO 81521

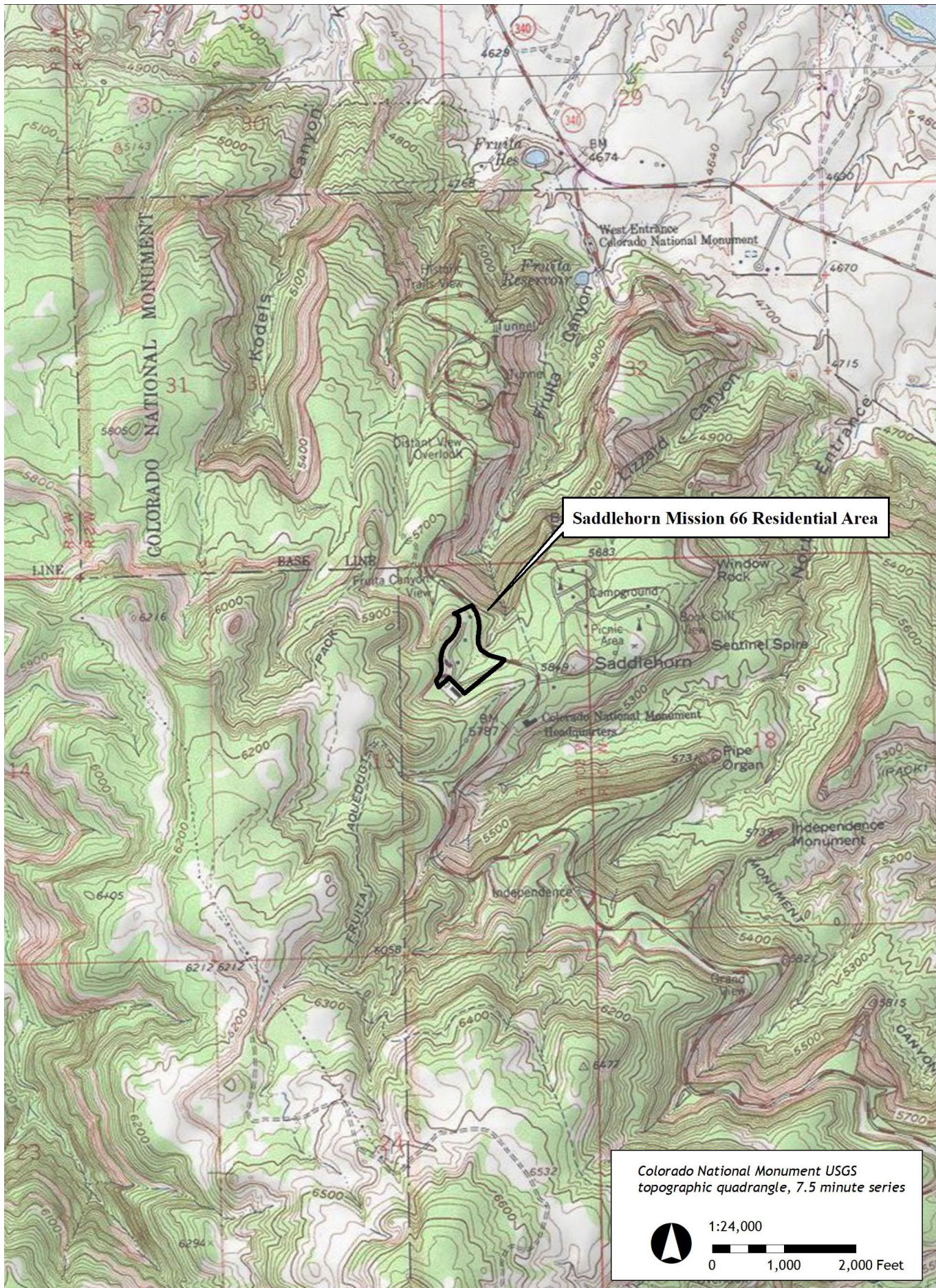
(970) 858-2800

*For additional guidance on documenting and evaluating historic cultural landscapes, refer to the following National Register bulletins: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places*; *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*; *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*; *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*; and *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering Historic Mining Properties*.

SKETCH MAP



USGS MAP



PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1. Saddlehorn Mission 66 Residential Area, view north from Water Tank Road/Black Ridge Trail with Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road near foreground. Visible from left to right: Saddlehorn Utility Area Historic District, Building #51, Building #43, Residence #42, Residence #40, Residence #37, and Rim Rock Drive.



Photo 2. Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road, view southwest. Visible from left to right: Residence #40, Residence #42, and Building #51.



Photo 3. Saddlehorn Maintenance/Residence Road, view northeast toward Residence #40.



Photo 4. Residence #37, view northeast.



Photo 5. Residence #40, view east.



Photo 6. Residence #42, view east.



Photo 7. Building #51, view southwest.



Photo 8. Building #43, view southeast.