

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 103

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
103A	From SH 70-K in Idaho Springs south via Echo Lake and East To (CO RD 151) (Little Bear Creek Rd) and Squaw Pass

Highway Location:

Counties: Clear Creek

Length (Miles): 22.418

OAHP Site Numbers (for previously recorded segments, if applicable)*:

<i>OAHP Site No.</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Assessment Date</i>	<i>Site Name</i>
5CC.1151.1	106 - Officially eligible>Field eligible	10/23/2001>07/13/2001	MT. EVANS ROAD - SEGMENT, SH 103 (IDAHO SPRINGS TO ECHO LAKE)
5CC.1899.1	Supports eligibility of entire linear resource>Field eligible	12/15/2010>10/26/2010	SH 5, MT. EVANS HIGHWAY - SEGMENT
5CC.1905.1	Supports eligibility of entire linear resource>Field eligible	05/10/2011>10/25/2010	MT. EVANS ROAD - SEGMENT

Discussion of Site Forms (for previously recorded segments, if applicable):

Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway listed above and available in Compass. In 2001, CDOT determined that 5CC.1151.1 was officially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) under Criteria A and C. The site form records the portion of the highway between Idaho Springs and Echo Lake, or the northwestern branch. In 2010, CDOT recorded a segment of SH 5 between mileposts 6.5 to 10 as 5CC.1899.1. SH 5 was assumed eligible to the National Register for the purposes of Section 106 and the segment supported the eligibility of the overall resource. In 2011, a site form for the Squaw Pass Improvement project (5CC.1905.1) recorded the portion of the road between Squaw Pass and the Clear Creek/Jefferson County line, finding the overall resource officially eligible to National Register and that the segment supported the eligibility of the overall resource.

Historic Districts located within 250 feet of highway (OAHP Site Number and Name)*:

<i>OAHP Site No.</i>	<i>District Name</i>	<i>Assessment (If Applicable)</i>
None	No historic districts are found on or adjacent to this highway	

**Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHP*

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Historical Data:

The historic data and significance statements on previously recorded segments of SH 5 and SH 103 should be referenced as new site forms are prepared. Because the highway has previously been determined to be officially eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C, this form includes a brief description of the highway but does not repeat the historical summary found on previous site forms. Please refer to the existing inventory forms for more details. This site form applies the registration requirements of the MPS to the highway.

SH 103 provides seasonal access to SH 5 and the summit of Mt. Evans and is located near the towns of Idaho Springs and Evergreen in Clear Creek and Jefferson counties. The total length of the highway is approximately 22 miles, which includes a 13 mile segment from Idaho Springs to Echo Lake, and a 9 mile segment between Echo Lake (along Squaw Pass Road) that terminates at the junction of Jefferson county roads 66 and 475, west of Evergreen. SH 5 is a 14.4 mile long highway that terminates at 14,130 feet and provides access to Mt. Evans, just below the 14,264 summit. Portions of SH 103 and SH 5 are usually open between Memorial Day and Labor Day each year, but the open and close dates are dependent on the amount of snowfall and the ability of the highway department to clear the road of snow. The highway, along with SH5, is also designated as the Mt. Evans Scenic Byway.

(Unless otherwise indicated, sources used in the preparation of this section included state highway maps, the Highways of Colorado by Matthew Salek, Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System, Colorado State Roads and Highways, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission, plans in the Online Transportation Information System (OTIS), and site forms for previously surveyed resources in Compass when available.)

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Not Significant - No historical significance identified

Significant - Historical significance identified (see details below)

Property Type and Areas of Significance:

A detailed explanation why this highway possesses historical significance is provided in the Significance Statement below.

Cultural:

Criterion A specific requirements

- Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- Representative example (Transportation)

Engineering:

Subtypes

- Farm-to-Market Road
- Limited Access, Multiple-Lane, Divided Highway/Freeway
- Highway Bypass

Criterion A specific requirements

- Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- Representative example (Transportation)
- Engineering achievement (Engineering)

Aesthetic:

Criterion A specific requirements

- Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- Representative example (Transportation)
- Engineering achievement (Engineering)
- Landscape architecture (Landscape Architecture)

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Historic periods of highway construction:

- Pre-territorial (pre-1861)
- Territorial and pre-automobile state roads (1861-1890)
- Automobile age (1890-1930)
- Depression and World War II (1930-1945)
- Postwar Interstate Era (1945-1973)
- Completion and Augmentation of Interstate System (1973-2000)

Level of Significance:

- Local
- State
- National

Significance Statement:

SH 103 is classified as an Aesthetic Route under the classification system in the MPS. Along with SH 5, SH 103 is significant at the state level.

Criterion A

As an Aesthetic Route, the highway possesses significance under Criterion A under the area of Transportation as a prominent project by the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). It is part of among the highest paved automobile route in the country and displays innovative engineering techniques and materials to provide automobile access to Colorado's highest mountains and a rare opportunity to travel through a high alpine environment on a state highway. In addition, constructing the road in limited warm-weather seasons (usually lasting only three months) required significant logistical planning and was physically demanding for road crews. Under the areas of Entertainment/Recreation, the route is also unique for its association with the Denver Mountain Parks and as one of the scenic drives of this system which was built cooperatively by the CHD and the City and County of Denver (Denver Mountain Parks) from 1918 to 1929. The Squaw Pass Road and this section of the Mt. Evans Road were designed to be used by tourists and residents to enjoy the scenic beauty of Mt. Evans. The road also features several picnic areas constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps including the Echo Lake Picnic Area, the ruins of Crest View House, and other campgrounds. Research and literature review indicates that features of the highway were constructed as part of Works Progress Administration projects, including road grading and culvert construction. As such, this highway is also associated with a federal work relief program and possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government at the state level. In summary, under Criterion A this highway possesses significance in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation, Transportation, and Politics/Government at the state level as an Aesthetic Route.

Criterion B

Research did not reveal this highway to be directly associated with the events or work of a person important in history, nor does research indicate the highway represents the efforts of a specific individual to secure construction of this highway for the economic development of a community or area of the state. Therefore, this highway does not possess significance under Criterion B.

Criterion C

As an Aesthetic Route, SH 5 possesses significance under Criterion C in the area of Engineering at the state level of significance. Beginning in 1918, the CHD redesigned and improved the road in cooperation with the Denver Mountain Parks. The design and engineering reflects the intent of the highway department to minimize environmental impacts in the design and construction of the road and special attention to the sensitivity of the high alpine environment. Significant features designed to minimize the impact of the road include the careful selection of the road location to minimize the grade, as well as the construction of cement and stone retaining walls, culverts, and other water control features. Low barriers of masonry guardrail were constructed of rubble moss rock and spaced at intervals of approximately four feet apart at the edge of the road to mark steep drop offs but not interfere with scenic views. Other water control features include linear alignments of stacked stone that direct the flow of water and mediate the extent of runoff on the highway. The design and construction exemplify bold engineering

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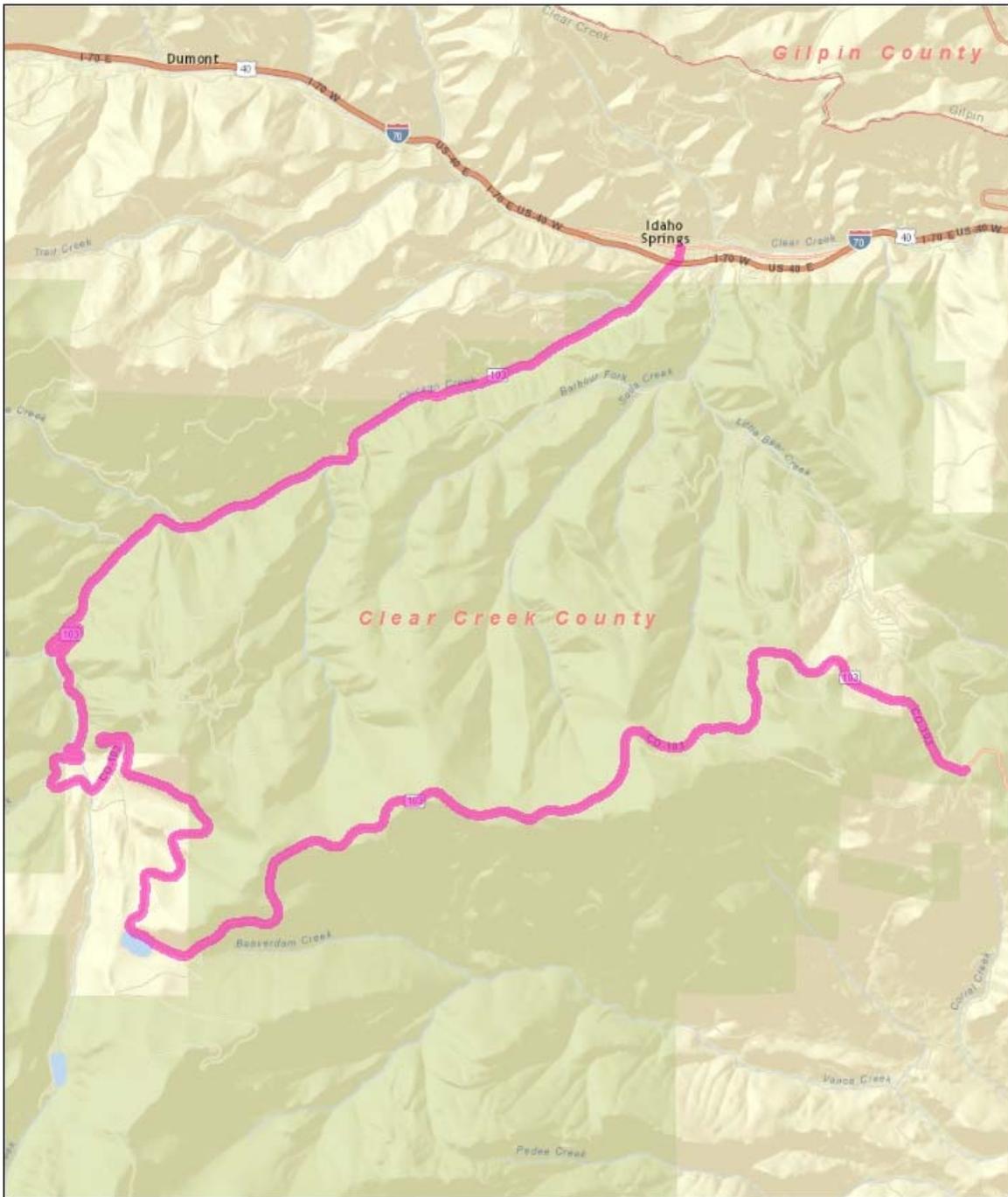
solutions to address the extreme challenges associated with constructing highways in mountainous terrain and SH 103 represents an engineering achievement of the CHD and the Denver Mountain Parks. The road is also significant as an engineering achievement as among the highest paved automobile highways in North America.

Criterion D

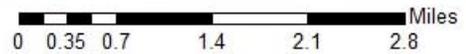
For a property to possess significance for information potential, the information yielded by the property must answer specific important research questions that cannot be otherwise answered. The technology of highway construction is well understood and documented. As such, this highway is unlikely to yield important information that cannot be discerned from archived plans and other records. Therefore, this highway does not possess significance under Criterion D.

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- SH 103
- County Boundary

SH 103



Map indicates the extent of the highway based on CDOT GIS data; portions co-signed with other highways may not be indicated.