

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 114

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
114A	From SH 50-A east of Gunnison southeast via North Pass To SH 285-B in Saguache

Highway Location:

Counties: Gunnison, Saguache
 Length (Miles): 61.651

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>
5SH.1908	Officially needs data>Field needs data>Field needs data	08/29/2002>04/23/2002> 11/2000	COCHETOPA STOCK DRIVEWAY
5SH.3832.4	Field eligible	10/11/2010	NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE SPANISH TRAIL / GUNNISON EXPEDITION / SALT LAKE ROAD/ GOVERNMENT ROAD-SEGMENT

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

Two Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway were identified in Compass, including the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail/Gunnison Expedition/Salt Lake Road/Government Road Segment (5SN.3832.4) and the Cochetopa Stock Driveway (5SH.1908). According to the inventory forms, trail segments are located along the north edge of SH 114 on the south side of the Saguache Creek Valley. The Spanish Trail was in use from 1829 to 1848 as a commercial route and transportation corridor between New Mexico and southern California and the Northern Branch consisted of a network of trails developed during the fur trade that provided access to western Colorado and northeastern Utah. In 1853, the Old Spanish trail was used by the Gunnison Expedition and by 1858 the route was improved as a wagon road. The eastern portion of the trail was incorporated as part of the Saguache & San Juan Toll Road in 1874. The overall route of the Spanish Trail, including the Northern Branch, the Main Route, and the Armijo Route, was designated a National Historic Trail in 2002 by the National Park Service. This segment of the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail (5SH.3832.4) was previously recommended as field eligible in 2010 for its contribution to the development of the western United States.

The Cochetopa Stock Driveway (5SH.1908) has an association with the early history of agriculture around Saguache having served as the route that local cattle and sheep ranchers used to move livestock between home ranches and summer pastures. This resource is generally located south of SH 114 and does not follow the same alignment or transportation corridor. The 2002 inventory form stated that more data was needed to evaluate this 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	

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Historical Data:

SH 114 is approximately 62 miles long and extends from U.S. Highway (US) 285 at Saguache to US 50 between Gunnison and Parlin. SH 114 begins at the northern edge of the San Luis Valley and extends northwest over North Pass (formerly Cochetopa Pass) toward Gunnison. One of the earliest transportation corridors in the area was the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail, of which SH 114 follows the general corridor between Saguache and Gunnison with remnants of the trail located north of present-day SH 114. Other wagon roads were also established and often followed trails established by Native Americans, explorers, fur trappers, and traders. Settlers from New Mexico moved into the San Luis Valley in the 1850s and established early irrigation and water reclamation systems to facilitate agricultural production. The San Luis Valley developed into a center for agriculture and livestock-raising within the region beginning in the mid-nineteenth century (Carter and Mehls, 1984: 46-48). The Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 brought an influx of people to the region and to the establishment of mining camps through the area to supply activities at the mines and those working there. Cattle ranching persists in mountain valleys through the area (Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 141; Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177).

Early roads in the region were often built to serve and connect communities for the movement of people and the transfer of commercial and agricultural goods. The sometimes narrow and rocky canyons combined with the altitude of this mountainous region made road building expensive, dangerous, and difficult. To help finance road construction, toll roads were common in the late nineteenth century prior to the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department. Local residents would often pool resources to build roads. Other roads were financed by wealthy individuals such as Otto Mears, an important figure in the history of road-building in southwestern Colorado. Mears constructed early toll roads over Cochetopa Pass, between Saguache and Lake City; over Poncha Pass; and between Ouray and Silverton. His influence on road-building in southwestern Colorado is best represented by the construction of the Million Dollar Highway, current US 550, which reflects early and bold efforts to establish roads in the region employing innovative engineering to meet the challenges of the terrain and altitude. Examples of other roads that reflect notable early road-building efforts to traverse mountainous areas of the state, such as early crossings of the continental divide, include SH 9, 17, 84, 160, 389, and the original gravel route over Cochetopa Pass (present-day county road NN14), which is no longer designated as part of SH 114. (Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177; Wyckoff 1999; 53-54).

The Good Roads Movement and establishment of the Colorado Highway Department in the first decades of the twentieth century led to the establishment of a highway network throughout the region and state (Carter and Mehls 1984: 138-141). A predecessor to portions of the present-day alignment of SH 114 is a segment of the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail, which was established earlier in the mid-nineteenth century. Historic highway maps indicate a vehicular road was in place along this route by 1916, which crossed the continental divide over Cochetopa Pass. The route was designated SH 114 by 1926. According to Salek, the early routing of the highway followed present-day County Road NN-14, not the current alignment of SH 114, over Cochetopa Pass. SH 114 is located north of the route over Cochetopa Pass. United States Public Works Project N.R.S. 369 was completed along a portion of SH 114 from US 50 south for approximately five miles. In 1963 the highway alignment was altered to cross North Cochetopa Pass instead of the original gravel Cochetopa Pass (Saguache Chamber of Commerce).

Road building in mountainous areas addressed challenging terrain and high altitude passes; however, no information was found to indicate the design, engineering, or construction of this highway differed from other roads in the region and the portion of the road that traversed Cochetopa Pass is no longer part of the current alignment. This road was one of many that functioned to supply and support towns and area industries by providing links to regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities. Apart from its earlier history and association with the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail, SH 114 historically developed as one component of the overall transportation network indistinguishable from other highways and providing access to local and regional destinations and did not provide direct access to destinations related to subsequent important historic themes.

(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 114 is classified as an Engineered and Cultural Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

As a Cultural Route the portion of this highway between Saguache and Gunnison possesses significance under Transportation at the state level for its earlier history and association with the Northern Branch of the Spanish Trail, which is evidenced by remnants of the trail located north of present-day SH 114. The road corridor was constructed over Cochetopa Pass by 1916, just a few years after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). However, the present-day routing of SH 114 over North Cochetopa Pass is not associated with the earlier road project by the CHD (which is along present-day County Road NN-14). As such, the road is no longer directly associated with this mountain pass. A five mile portion of the road extending south of the highway's intersection with US 50 was constructed as part of United States Public Works Project N.R.S. 369 in 1934 and possesses significance under Criterion A in the areas of Politics/Government at the state level for its association to a Depression-era federal relief project. No evidence suggests that the route served as an important farm-to-market road or was pivotal in the transfer of agricultural goods or livestock within the region and research did not indicate that the road has an important association to mining or industry to distinguish it from other roads in the region.

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

Research and literature review yielded no evidence to indicate the use of innovative or important engineering techniques that serve to distinguish this highway from other roads within mountainous areas of the state. An earlier iteration of this route is located along present-day County Road NN-14, may have an association with an early toll road constructed by Otto Mears and the early development of road crossing the continental divide via Cochetopa Pass. However the route was relocated over North Cochetopa Pass in 1963 and as currently designated, the highway's design and construction appear to have utilized techniques common to other roads in mountainous areas and no longer has a direct association with this earlier history and does not possess significance under Criterion C.

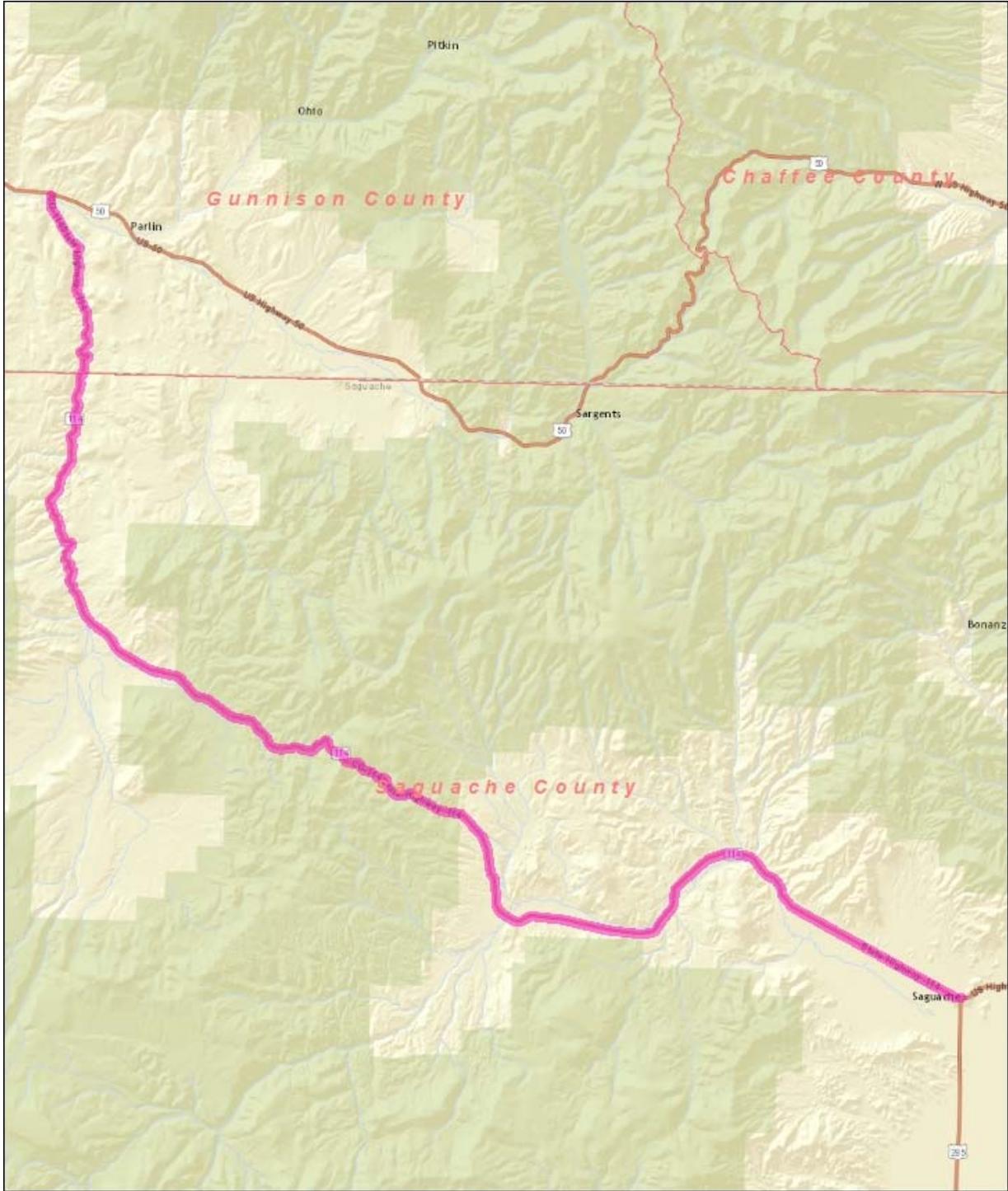
Criterion D

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.

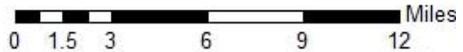
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- SH 114
- County Boundary

SH 114

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