

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 134

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
134A	From SH 131-B at Toponas east via Gore Pass To SH 40-A northwest of Kremmling

Highway Location:

Counties: Routt, Grand
Length (Miles): 26.927

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>
5GA.3188.1	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	04/12/2004>06/11/2003	HIGHWAY 134
5RT.707	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible>Field not eligible	04/12/2004>08/20/0003>06/28/1990	HISTORIC HWY 134

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

Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway listed above are available in Compass. 5GA3188.1 discusses the Gore Range Wagon Road established in 1855 as a route to Soda Springs. Unfortunately the form did not identify with certainty that the route of SH 134 is part of the historic wagon route and the segment is listed as needs data. 5RT.707 (historic SH 134) was unavailable for review, however, the segment of the historic SH 134 was determined officially not eligible in 2004.

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:

SH 134 begins at the junction with SH 131 at Toponas and travels east over Gore Pass to U.S. Highway (US) 40, just northwest of Kremmling. The length of the route is 26.927 miles.

Historic 1881 General Land Office maps show the historic wagon route from the Toponas area towards Kremmling, naming it the "Road to Steamboat Springs." The historic route passed over Gore Pass, named for an English lord who killed massive amounts of buffalo and wild game during a hunting expedition in 1855. Present day SH 134 follows a similar alignment and is present on the early state highway maps from 1916 as State Primary Route 39. Until 1968, SH 134 was signed SH 84. It was changed to SH 134 in 1968 to avoid confusion with current US 84 in southern Colorado. In the mid 1950s, improvements were made to the route, including paving in 1957.

The westernmost third of Colorado is dominated by the Colorado Plateau, which stretches from western Colorado into eastern Utah, northern Arizona, and northwestern New Mexico. The Colorado Plateau is a high desert with scattered forests and mesas (or tablelands), including the forested Flat Tops and Grand Mesa, the desert buttes of the Bookcliffs and Roan Plateau, and the juniper studded canyons and red sandstone formations that include Colorado National Monument. The region is also characterized by broad swaths of federally-owned land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service (Routt National Forest, Flat Tops Wilderness, and Grand Mesa National Forest), with lesser amounts belonging to the National Park Service (Colorado National Monument and Dinosaur National Monument).

Before the establishment of Colorado Territory in 1861, this area was part of Utah Territory (1854), reinforcing the physical connection between western Colorado and eastern Utah. Similarly, the land in the northwestern part of Colorado resembles southwestern Wyoming and there are strong economic and social connections as ranchers from southern Wyoming often owned land in northern Colorado, and vice versa. The Colorado River and its major tributaries, including the Colorado (Grand), Uncompahgre, and Gunnison are the major sources of water. Up north, the Yampa and White rivers feed into the Green River before it joins the Colorado in Utah and are the lifelines of the region. As with other parts of the arid state, the rivers dictated the location of settlements, railroads, agriculture, and the state's roads.

After the Utes were removed in 1880 to reservations in Utah (leaving only two small Ute reservations in the extreme southwest corner of Colorado), the railroads quickly mobilized to provide transportation and economic opportunity for farmers, ranchers, and other businesses. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad built the first lines into the San Juan, Gunnison, and Colorado (Grand) River valleys between 1881 to 1883 and helped develop the towns of Grand Junction, Montrose, and Delta, among others. The railroad to Steamboat Springs and Craig was slower to develop, however, given the isolation of the area and issues with winter travel. David Moffat's Denver, Northwestern & Pacific Railroad entered Steamboat in 1909. After Moffat's death in 1911, the railroad was bought by the Denver and Salt Lake, and it continued to its termination point to Craig in 1913. The railroad stimulated the development of coal mining in the Yampa River Valley which required a reliable source of freight transportation.

In northwest Colorado, energy-related resources such as coal, oil shale, oil, and natural gas have been important to the economy of the region since the late 1880s although the industry was slow to develop along the Yampa until railroad lines provided transportation after 1909. Coal deposits are located in the Yampa Valley west and south of Steamboat Springs, the Danforth Hills northwest of Meeker, and the Grand Hogback (near New Castle) north of Glenwood Springs. Oil and gas are found near Rangely and Craig, and oil shale has been a boom and bust commodity in the Pieance Basin, northeast of Grand Junction, since the turn of the twentieth century. While trains are still used to haul coal through the area, trucks became increasingly more important to the industry after World War II and the improvement of the area's highways.

As a historic wagon road, the route was used to transport goods over the Gore Pass to the Steamboat Springs area. The town of Toponas was founded as a railroad stop for the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad when rail service started in 1909. The route connects the transportation corridors of SH 131 to US 40. However, this route was never a major transportation corridor for agriculture and mining. It was a minor transportation route and thus a review of sources did not reveal that this route represents important road engineering achievements, an important road type or subtype identified in the MPS, or that served to provide an important connections to markets or facilitated development related to mining and transportation.

(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

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Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 134

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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Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 134

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 134 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

SH 134 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS. As an Engineered Route, State Highway 134 does not possess significance under Criterion A. The route was a minor transportation route from railroad connections near Toponas to US 40. Research failed to indicate this highway has a direct association with a historical theme important in Colorado history, or that it represents an early or prominent road construction project of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD), or the connections it provides from any subsequent highway improvements. As such, the highway does not possess significance under Criterion A.

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 a representative example, a state highway that exhibits physical features indicative of an important type or subtype identified in the MPS reflecting its original design or important variation may possess significance. A state highway may also possess significance for particularly important engineering achievements.

State Highway 134 is not considered to be an early or prominent project of the CHD. Research and literature review yielded no evidence to indicate the use of innovative or important engineering design or construction techniques that serve to distinguish this highway from other roads and does not appear to exhibit important engineering innovations or important later modifications. The highway's design and construction appear to fall within the established standard practices of state highway design and construction of the time and the highway does not possess significance under Criterion C.

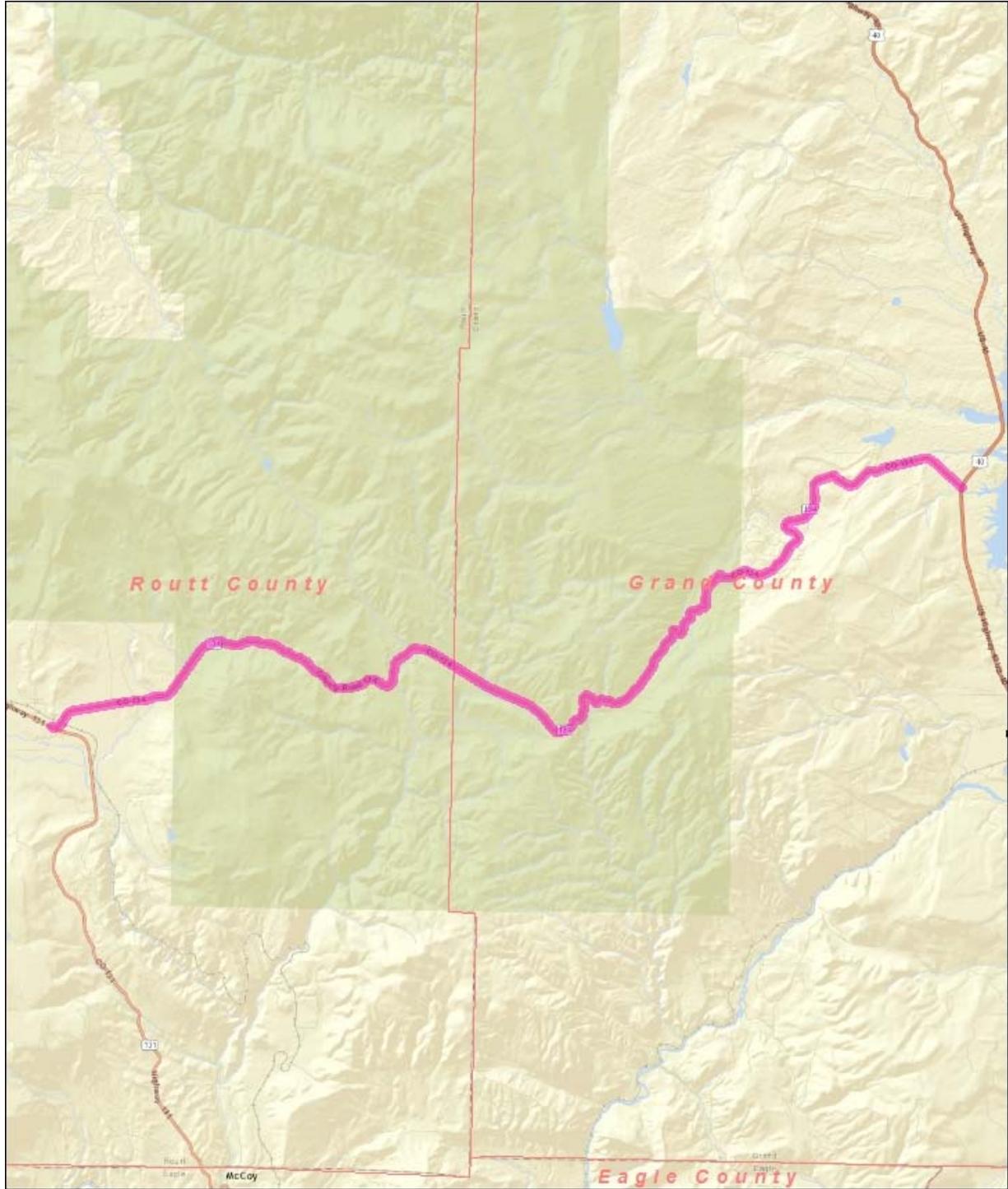
Criterion D

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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Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 134



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-  SH 134
-  County Boundary

SH 134

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