

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 145

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
145A	From SH 160-A in Cortez Northeast via Dolores, Rico, and Ophir and Northwest via Placerville and Norwood To SH 141-A East of Naturita

Highway Location:

Counties: Montrose, San Miguel, Dolores, Montezuma

Length (Miles): 116.187

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

<i>OAHPSite No.</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Assessment Date</i>	<i>Site Name</i>
5DL.1942.1	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible	12/01/1997>08/26/1997	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD
5MT.11774	Field needs data	7/6/2007	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD
5MT.11774.1	Officially needs data>Officially needs data>Field needs data>Field needs data>No assessment given on form	12/21/2007>12/07/1993>07/06/2007>10/02/2003>07/29/1992	DOLORES-RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.11	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.2	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.3	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.4	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.5	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD
5MT.11774.6	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.7	Officially needs data>Field needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>10/02/2003>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.8	Officially needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.11774.9	Officially needs data>Field needs data>No assessment given on form	12/07/1993>10/02/2003>07/29/1992	DOLORES AND RICO ROAD (SEGMENT)
5MT.13750	Field not eligible	8/25/1999	
5SM.6367.1	Officially not eligible>Does not support eligibility of entire linear resource>Field not eligible>Does not support eligibility of entire linear resource	04/13/2009>04/13/2009>10/09/2008>09/18/2013	COLORADO HIGHWAY 145 - SEGMENT

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

Fourteen Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms were identified for previously recorded segments of this highway, including 5SM.6367.1, 5DL.1942.1, 5MT.11774, 5MT.11774.1, 5MT.11774.11, 5MT.11774.2, 5MT.11774.3, 5MT.11774.4, 5MT.11774.5, 5MT.11774.6, 5MT.11774.7, 5MT.11774.8, 5MT.11774.9, and 5MT.13750. Present-day SH 145 follows portions of the former roadbed of the Dolores-Rico Road, which connected the two towns through the

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Dolores River Valley. Only one previously recorded segment corresponds to a segment of SH 145 (5SM.6367.1) and was officially determined not eligible in 2009. The Dolores-Rico Road (5DL.1942.1) was officially determined not eligible in 1997. The rest of the segments listed above refer to various segments of the Dolores-Rico Road that were officially determined to need more data at various times or determined not eligible.

The Placerville School (5SM.117) is also located along Front Street in Placerville and determined field eligible in 2004, but does not correspond to a previously recorded road segment or relate to the road.

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 145 is approximately 116 miles long and extends between the junction with SH 141 in Naturita southeast through Norwood, Placerville, Rico, and Dolores to Cortez where it runs concurrently with North Dolores Road before terminating at the U.S. Highway (US) 160 junction. Southwestern Colorado is a generally mountainous region that owes much of its history to mining. The earliest transportation corridors in southwest Colorado were wagon roads that often followed trails established by Native Americans, explorers, fur trappers, and traders. The highway does not have an association with early trails.

The Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 brought an influx of people to Colorado's southwestern region in search of fortune and led to the establishment of mining camps through the area to supply activities at the mines and those working in the mines. Gold, silver, lead, and zinc were mined at various periods throughout the region. Placerville is surrounded by rolling hills and wide expanses of grassland. Founded as a mining camp, Placerville later became an important shipping point for livestock and by the 1940s was an important loading point in this region (Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177; Wyckoff 1999; 53, Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 423-425). Toward the southern end of the region near Dolores and Cortez and interspersed in valleys in the mountainous areas are grazing pastures and ranch land where livestock-raising persists. (Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 141, 426; Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177).

Early roads in the region were often built to serve and connect mining camps with nearby mining districts and communities for the movement of people and the transfer of commercial and agricultural goods from surrounding agricultural areas. 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 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, and 389 among others. (Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177; Wyckoff 1999; 53-54).

The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically throughout the state between 1910 and 1920. The Good Roads Movement and founding 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). The Dolores-Rico Road was an early road dating to 1911 and located along a small portion of the SH 145 corridor. Research indicates that the grade of the Dolores-Rico Road was located above the Rio Grande & Southern Railroad and not along the present-day alignment of SH 145. Historic highway maps indicate that a road along the general alignment of present-day SH 145 between Dolores, Rico, and further north to Montrose was in place by 1916. The road was designated SH 145 by 1926 but its southern terminus at that time was Dolores, not Cortez. According to Salek, by 1938 SH 10 was rerouted in Cortez and SH 145 was extended south from Dolores to Cortez to its current terminus at US 160. By 1954 a section between Rico and Telluride Junction was briefly turned back and a spur was designated east of SH 145 into Telluride and then turned back by 1997.

No information was found to indicate the design, engineering, or construction of this highway differed from other roads in the region. 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. Research, literature review, and historic mapping does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes; rather it historically comprised one component of the overall transportation network by linking other highways and providing access to local destinations.

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

Criterion A

The road corridor that eventually became SH 145 was constructed by 1916, just a few years after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). Although it was constructed in the early years of the CHD it was not a prominent transportation route that provided a direct connection to destinations related to important historic themes. No evidence suggests that the route directly corresponds to the former roadbed for the Dolores-Rico Road, which has many segments that have been previously determined not eligible. There is no indication that the road was built or improved as part of a Depression-era federal relief program. Although SH 145 passes through ranch land toward its southern end no evidence suggested that it served as an important farm-to-market road or was pivotal in the transfer of agricultural goods or livestock within the region. Nor did research find an important association to mining or industry that distinguishes it from other roads in the region. Therefore, this road 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

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. The highway's design and construction appear to have utilized techniques common to other roads in mountainous areas. Overall this highway appears to reflect the standard types of design and construction practices and it does not appear to possess significance under Criterion C.

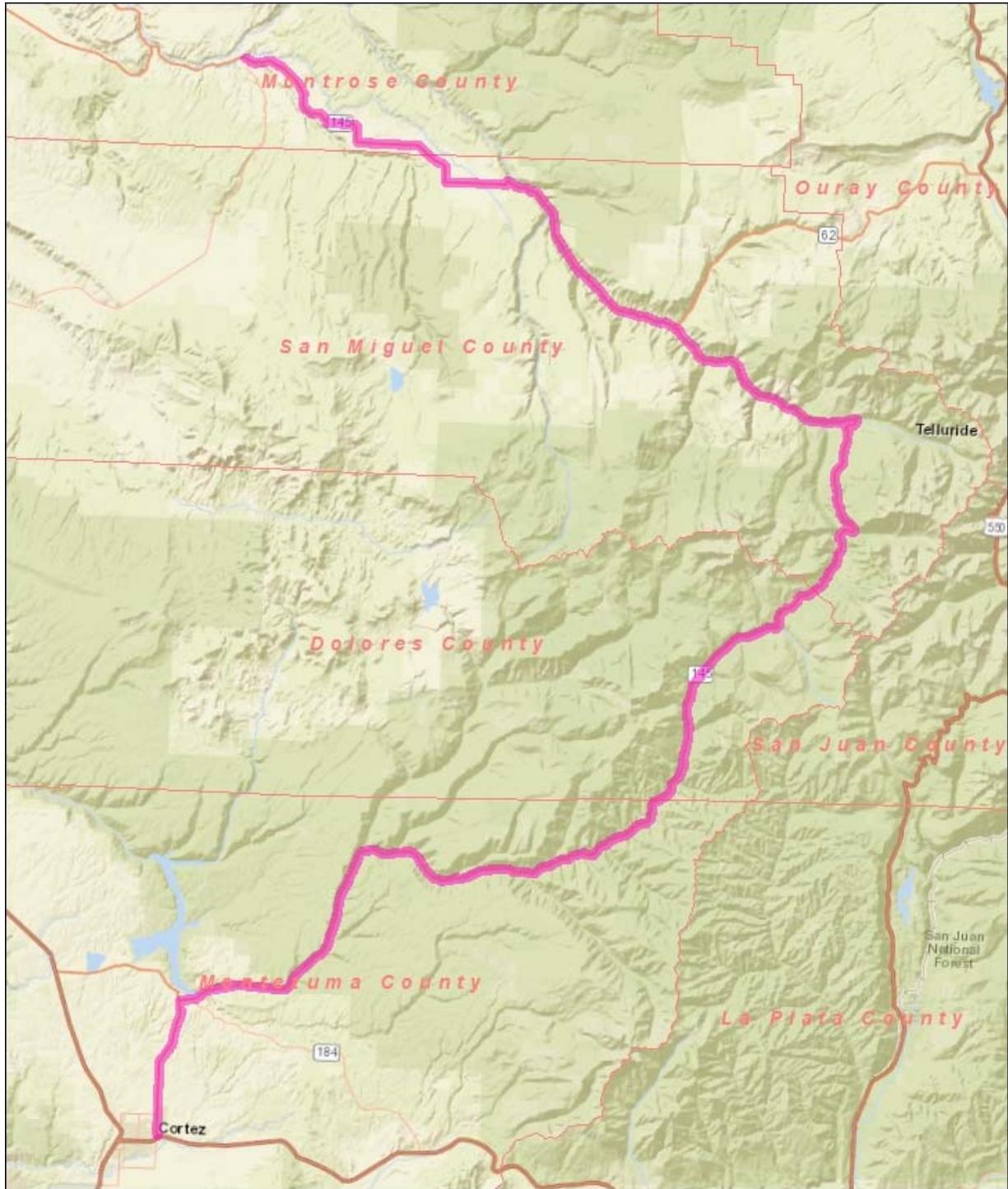
Criterion D

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.

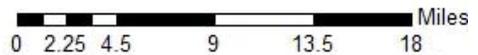
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- SH 145
- County Boundary

SH 145



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