

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 325

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
325A	From SH 13-A north of Rifle northeast via Rifle Gap State Recreation Area To County Road 217 in Rifle Falls State Recreation Area

Highway Location:

Counties: Garfield
 Length (Miles): 11.285

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>
5GF.2156.3	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible>Field not eligible	07/13/1995>04/09/1999>05/25/1995	GOVERNMENT ROAD/STATE ROUTE 13
5GF.2949	Field eligible	2/6/2002	SH 13

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

The Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway listed above and available in Compass is a discussion of SH 13 and included in Highways to the Sky. Although not applicable to this highway, it does provide some background and context for the history of the Rifle area.

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 325 extends for 11.39 miles from the Junction of SH 13, north of Rifle, around Rifle Gap Reservoir and ending at Rifle Falls Fish Hatchery in Garfield County.

1890 and 1913 GLO maps show a wagon road from Rifle following the East Rifle Creek. The 1913 map is more detailed and labels this route the Rifle to Buford Road. The route did not enter the state highway system until 1939. The addition of this highway to the state system occurred during the administration of Charles Vail, State Highway Engineer from 1930 to 1945, when Vail added more than 3600 miles to the 533-mile system. Some of the miles came from converting abandoned railroad lines to highways, and others were associated with New Deal programs in rural parts of Colorado, where the poor condition of roads required major improvements (Autobee and Dobson 2000: E-34). The route was realigned in 1963 around Rifle Gap Reservoir. The route was paved by 1966 (Salek).

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.

Agriculture in the Grand and Gunnison river valleys started with experimentation on the best crops suited for the environment. Farmers in the early 1880s discovered the river valleys ideal for fruit growing due to the lower elevations, long growing seasons, and potential for large irrigation systems such as the Grand Valley Canal on the north side of the Colorado in the 1890s. The fruit growing region stretched from Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade along the Colorado River to Delta, Hotchkiss, and Paonia on the North Fork of the Gunnison. Peaches thrived near Palisade, while apples and pears did well near Cedaredge and areas of Hotchkiss and Paonia. Farmers also had success with sugar beets, corn, wheat, barley, millets, and potatoes (Wyckoff 1999: 227-231). Settlements clustered near river bottoms at Parachute, Rifle, Meeker, Steamboat Springs, and Craig, where large ranches grazed cattle and sheep on higher benches above the river bottoms, much of it leased from the federal government for grazing.

After 1880, the area around Rifle and Rifle Falls was settled with homesteaders and ranchers. The natural waterfall of Rifle Falls has been a tourist destination since 1884, including a tourist resort operated by Allan Zerbe from 1890-1920 (Colorado Parks and Wildlife). The town of Rifle operated a hydroelectric plant from 1910-1958 near the Rifle Falls, providing electric power for the town of Rifle. The Rifle Gap Reservoir was built in 1958 and Rifle Falls State Park was designated in 1966. SH 325 runs on the west side of the state park and the highway provides access to the parking area for the falls and the Rifle Falls Fish Hatchery, operated by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

A review of sources did not reveal that this route represents important road engineering achievements, an important

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road type or subtype identified in the MPS, or that served to provide an important connections to markets or facilitated development related to transportation and agriculture.

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

Criterion A

As a an Engineered Route, SH 325 does not possess significance under Criterion A. The route provides a connection to the Rifle Falls State Park and the Fish Hatchery, yet the State Park and Hatchery are not considered important destinations and the highway is outside of the state park boundary. 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.

SH 325 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.

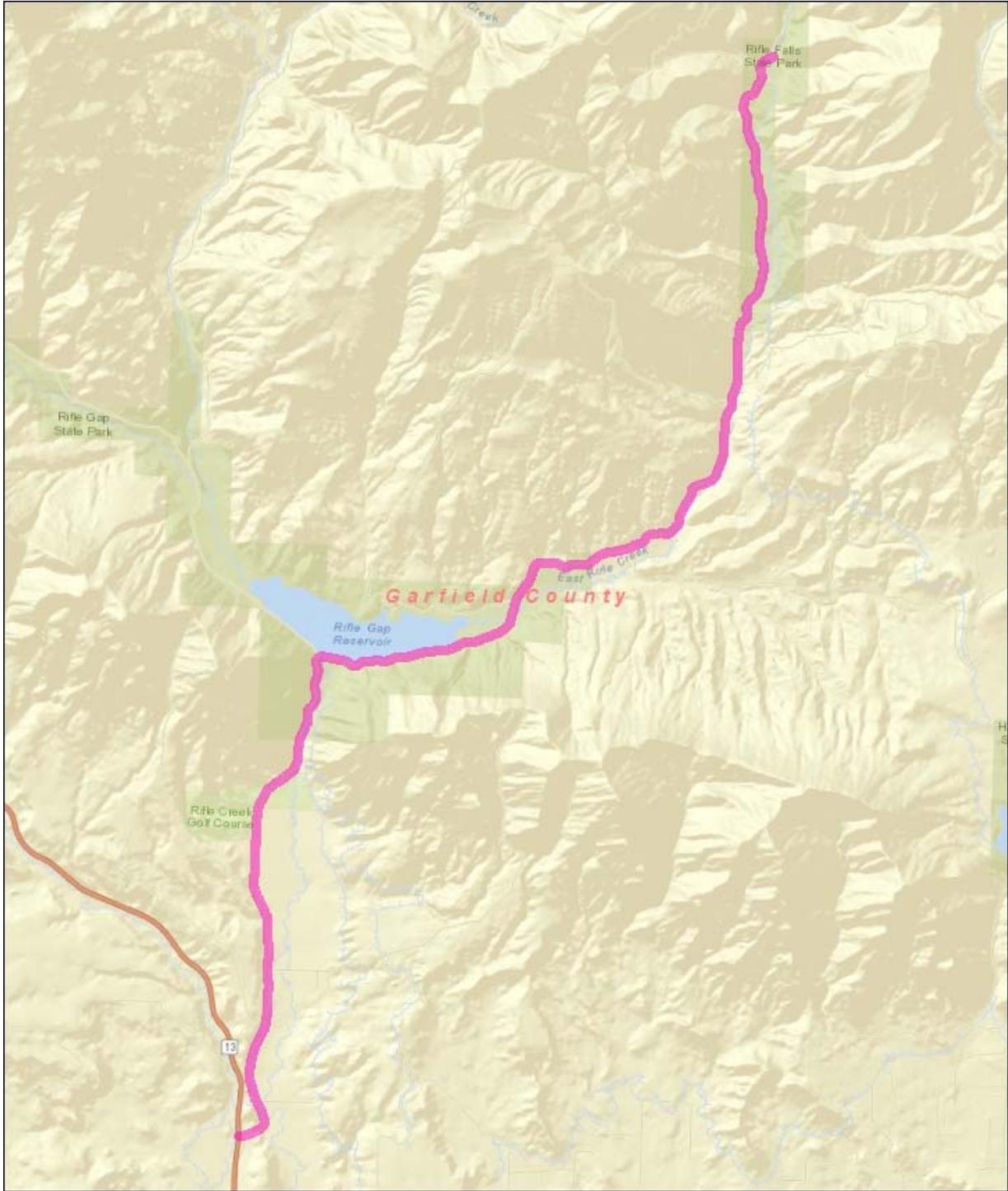
Criterion D

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.

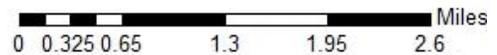
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- SH 325
- County Boundary

SH 325



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