

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 92

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
092A	From SH 50-A in Delta east via Hotchkiss and southeast via Crawford and Black Mesa To SH 50-A at Blue Mesa Dam

Highway Location:

Counties: Delta, Montrose, Gunnison
Length (Miles): 73.204

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>
None	No previously recorded segments are found on or adjacent to this highway		

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

No Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway were identified in Compass.

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 92 is approximately 73 miles long and extends between U.S. Highway (US) 50 in Delta and the US 50 junction west of Sapinero. Western Colorado is dominated by the Colorado Plateau, which extends from western Colorado into eastern Utah, northern Arizona, and northwestern New Mexico. The region is characterized by a high desert environment that includes mesas, canyons, and a few scattered forests. Scattered settlement and farming in the region began in earnest in the 1880s. Agriculture in the Grand River and Gunnison River valleys focused on fruit-growing, which was well-suited for the low elevations and long growing season. The fruit growing region extended from Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade along the Colorado River to Delta, Hotchkiss, and Paonia on the North Fork of the Gunnison River. Agricultural development was accompanied by the construction of railroads as they 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, and others (Wyckoff 1999: 227-231).

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). Historic state highway maps indicate a road along the general corridor of present-day SH 92 with similar termini was in place by 1916. The route was designated SH 92 by 1926. Between 1940 and 1954 the route extended for a short segment west of Delta along the south side of US 50 where it connected to US 50 at its western terminus. U.S. Public Works Project No. N.R.S. 379, located between Crawford and Maher, dates to 1934 and included bridge work as well as updates to the roadway. Plans for other federal relief projects along SH 92 identified during research date to 1935 and include N.R.S. Project No. 379-B south of Crawford along the same corridor and U.S. Public Works Highway Project No. N.R.S.-W.R. 409 located on the east side of Delta. According to Salek the construction of the Blue Mesa Reservoir in 1966 led to a slight realignment of SH 92.

(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.)

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

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

Criterion A

The road corridor that eventually became SH 92 was constructed by 1916, just a few years after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) as is significant under Transportation as an early example. No evidence suggests this road served as an important farm-to-market road or was pivotal in the transfer of agricultural goods or livestock within the region. In addition, research did not indicate that the road has other important associations to mining or industry that distinguish it from other roads in the region. Although it was constructed in the early years of the CHD no evidence suggests that it was a prominent transportation route that provided a direct connection to destinations related to important historic themes. However, several Depression-era federal work relief projects were completed along SH 92 in 1934 and 1935 and the segments in which these projects occurred possess significance under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Politics/Government at the state level.

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 design or construction techniques that serve to distinguish this highway from other roads within the mountainous southwest region and it 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

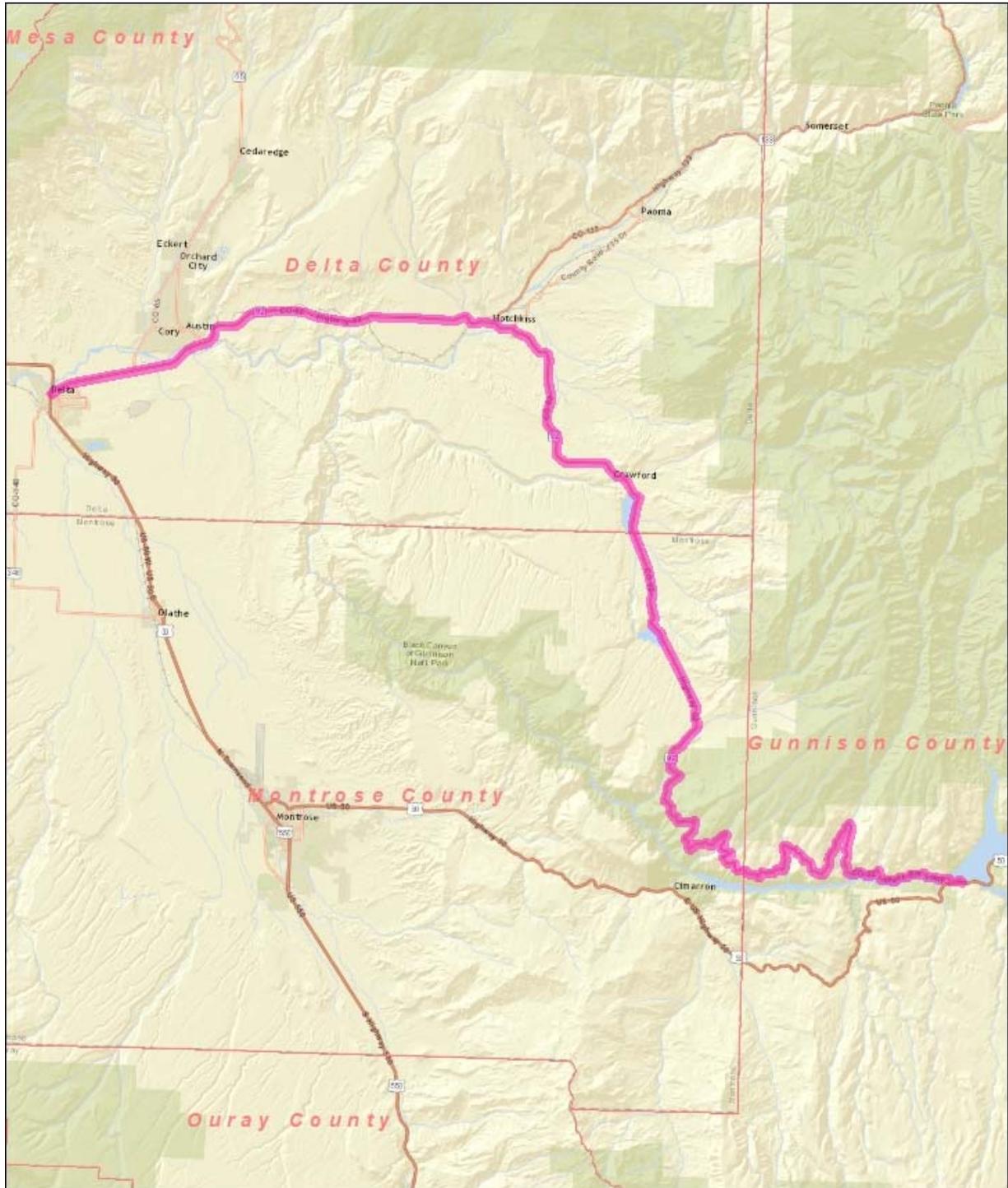
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significance under Criterion D.

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- SH 92
- County Boundary

SH 92



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