

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**



1091

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Oak Creek Dam

other names/site number N/A

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2. Location

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street & number N/A not for publication N/A  
city or town N/A vicinity N/A  
state Utah code UT county Garfield code 017  
zip code N/A

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide x locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M Greenberg 8-4-89  
Signature of certifying official Date

National Park Service  
Federal agency

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. J. [Signature] 8-15-96  
Signature of commenting official Date

Utah State Historic Preservation Office  
State agency



7. Description

Architectural Classification

No Style

Materials

foundation N/A
roof N/A
walls N/A
other Concrete
Stone

Narrative Description

(See continuation sheet.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- x A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations - none apply

Areas of Significance Agriculture

Period of Significance 1914-1946

Significant Dates 1914

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Lanning, Jim (overseer)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See continuation sheet.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Capitol Reef N. P. Archives, Torrey, Utah

Bureau of Land Management Records, Salt Lake City, Utah

Durfy, Keith - telephone interview by Ben Brower, February 23, 1995

O'Bannon, Patrick. Capitol Reef National Park Historic Resource Study and Survey Report, NPS, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, CO, June 1992.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

OAK CREEK DAM

GARFIELD COUNTY, UTAH

Primary Location of Additional Data  
 \_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office  
 \_\_\_ Other State agency  
x Federal agency  
 \_\_\_ Local government  
 \_\_\_ University  
 \_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: Capitol Reef National Park Archives, Torrey, Utah

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property 2.0

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>12</u>	<u>487947.875</u>	<u>4214870</u>	3	___	___
2	___	___	___	4	___	___

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses a 2 acre area in which the dam and associated spillway are located. This area corresponds with the UTM reference point noted above.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses only the historic dam and reconstructed spillway.

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Benjamin Brower, Historian  
 organization for: National Park Service, IMFA, CPSSO date 1995  
 street & number 12795 W. Alameda Parkway P.O. Box 25287 telephone (303) 499-7195  
 city or town Denver state CO zip code 80225-0287

Additional Documentation  
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Continuation Sheets - included.

Maps - see attached USGS map indicating the property's location.

Photographs - included.

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Property Owner  
=====

name Capitol Reef National Park  
 street & number HC 70, Box 15 telephone (801) 425-3791  
 city or town Torrey state UT zip code 84775-9602

=====  
 Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet**

Oak Creek Dam  
Wayne County, Utah  
Capitol Reef National Park MPS

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**Description**

The Oak Creek Dam is located on Oak Creek within Garfield County in the south central portion of Capitol Reef National Park. The site is approximately 4 miles west of Sandy Ranch (located outside park boundaries). Oak Creek Dam is a curved concrete dam with an associated stone and concrete spillway. Water is diverted from the natural creek bed into the spillway. The east face of the dam is approximately 40 feet in height. The west face extends approximately 3 feet above the creek bed. Two half-round weep holes are located in the east face of the dam. The spillway consists of stone and concrete with metal control gates; it channels water into an irrigation ditch or through an overflow gate.

The present spillway was constructed circa 1965 to replace the original which had been rendered ineffective by excessive siltation. The replacement spillway differs from the original in that the original was made only of concrete. In spite of the replacement of the original spillway, the resource still maintains overall historic integrity and meets National Register criteria.

**Statement of Significance**

The Oak Creek Dam has local significance under National Register Criterion A for its association with agriculture (cattle ranching) in the Capitol Reef area. The dam was an integral part of a larger irrigation system which provided vital and scarce water to a large scale ranching operation. It is the largest single structure associated with large-scale irrigation remaining in Capitol Reef National Park. The period of significance of the dam dates from its date of construction circa 1914 to 1946, the end of the historic period as defined by the National Register.

The dam's significance is associated with the historical context "Grazing in Capitol Reef National Park, 1880-1946" which is included in the cover form for the *Capitol Reef National Park Multiple Property Submission*.

Oak Creek Dam was constructed circa 1914 as part of the irrigation system for Sandy Ranch, a cattle and sheep ranch located just east of the present park boundaries. Jim Lanning oversaw construction of the dam. The dam diverted Oak Creek into a canal that carried the water to Sandy Ranch. The dam is one element of a system that includes Oak Creek Reservoir and Lower Browns Reservoir west of the present park boundaries. A new spillway was constructed of stone and concrete circa 1965 because siltation had rendered the original concrete spillway ineffective.

The dam was constructed at a time when drought and high livestock numbers had brought the overgrazing of western ranges to a crisis situation. It was built at, and represents, the apogee of a period of major rangeland degradation between 1900-1934. Prior to the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act which implemented stricter range control, huge herds of cattle and sheep competed for the scarce forage of the Waterpocket Fold area in under restricted grazing which resulted in major ecological damage. Furthermore, the dam was built on the eve of a commodity price increases caused by the outbreak of the First World War in Europe. This brief boom period collapsed soon after the end of hostilities in 1918. The ensuing inter-war era witnessed a massive worldwide collapse of agricultural prices that brought to

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

an end the general prosperity which farmers had enjoyed from the mid-nineteenth century. This economic plight, combined with environmental crisis, culminated in the calamity of the so-called dust bowl era of the 1930s.

The Oak Creek Dam is an excellent and well-preserved example of a structure which represents the efforts exerted by local ranchers and farmers to capture and control scarce water resources for subsistence and economic gain. In addition, it is a product of larger social, economic, and environmental trends which had great historical impact on rural society in the early 20th century.



- 1) OAK CREEK DAM
- 2) CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK, TORREY,  
UTAH
- 3) GLENN CEPONIS
- 4) NOVEMBER 1990
- 5) JOHN MILNER ASSOCIATES
- 6) DAM AND SPILLWAY, VIEW TO NORTHEAST
- 7) 1



- 1) Oak Creek Dam
- 2) Capitol Reef National Park, Torrey, Utah
- 3) Glenn Ceponis
- 4) November 1990
- 5) John Milner Associates
- 6) Spillway, View to Northeast
- 7) 2



- 1) OAK CREEK DAM
- 2) CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK, TORREY, UTAH
- 3) GLENN CEPONIS
- 4) NOVEMBER 1990
- 5) JOHN MILNER ASSOCIATES
- 6) DETAIL OF SPILLWAY, VIEW TO SOUTH
- 7) 3