

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUL 8 1988

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Owachomo Bridge Trail  
other names/site number Zeke's Trail

2. Location

street & number N/A N/A not for publication  
city, town Blanding X vicinity  
state Utah code UT county San Juan code 037 zip code N/A

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Charles C. Beards* Date *June 30, 1988*  
State or Federal agency and bureau *National Park Service*

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official *Max J. Evans* Date *5/27/88*  
State or Federal agency and bureau *Utah State Historic Preservation Officer*

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. *Bruce Noble* *2/2/89*  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
vacant/not in use  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
 (enter categories from instructions)  
  
no style or stylistic terminology  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)  
  
 foundation N/A  
 walls N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof N/A  
 other Stone/sandstone  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Natural Bridges National Monument is a 7,435-acre park located east of the Hite Crossing of Lake Powell and west of Blanding in southeastern Utah. The majority of the park exists as a natural area, but for its size has relatively heavy National Park Service development. The environment of the Monument is a mixture of desert and pinyon-juniper woodlands. Precipitation ranges from six to nine inches per year. The temperature extremes vary from lows in the teens in mid-winter to 100° in mid-summer.

The Owachomo Bridge Trail is a former hiking trail three to six feet wide and approximately one-quarter mile long. The Trail follows natural contours on the sandstone as it descends to the bottom of Armstrong Canyon. It evidences much work along certain segments, including wooden steps made of rough hewn logs staked in place and filled with small stones and earth, a segment of random and coursed fieldstone steps, and an area in which steps were carved into the natural sandstone. Except for some erosion of the fill material behind the wooden steps the Trail retains a high degree of physical integrity. It is in its original location and its function and relation to the nearby Owachomo natural bridge remains obvious, leaving its setting and function in tact.

See attached List of Classified Structures(LCS) form.

The archeological resources of Natural Bridges National Monument are and will be addressed in other nominations.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Conservation</u>	<u>1925-1935</u>	
_____	_____	_____
_____		
_____	Cultural Affiliation	
_____	<u>N/A</u>	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	
_____	_____	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Park Development

The federal government and the growth of the conservation movement is one of the most prominent themes in the twentieth century history of southeastern Utah, as indeed it is for much of the state and the West. Beginning during the closing years of the nineteenth century, the federal government changed its philosophy about Western lands from unregulated use and abuse to one of preservation and controlled use to halt the rapid degradation of America's natural wealth. This philosophical reorientation led to the creation of federal timber reserves (National Forests), federal development of water resources and the preservation of America's scenic, scientific, and cultural heritage through the National Park System. In southeastern Utah this new trend became apparent only after the turn of the century. But from Theodore Roosevelt's administration on through World War II and beyond, the federal government's role in the region has grown. The Great Depression and relief programs of the 1930s solidified this relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Southeastern Utah's history since World War II, tends to be a continuation of certain trends, such as the relationship with the federal government. Among the most important has been the development of a tourist industry based on the outdoor recreation opportunities offered by southeastern Utah. The federal government played an active role in stimulating and/or controlling that new industry. Of the federal agencies active in the region after World War II none has had a greater stabilizing influence than the National Park Service and its work to develop recreation-tourist facilities. Before World War II Natural Bridges National Monument existed, but its use by visitors remained small because of access and facility limitations. Under the leadership

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Mehls, Steven F. and Mehls, Carol Drake. Canyonlands National Park, Arches National Park, Natural Bridges National Monument Historic Resource Study. Denver: National Park Service, 1986.

Natural Bridges National Monument, Utah. Visitor Center Collections. Zeke Johnson Files and Diaries.

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 #

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Specify repository:

Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 2 approxiamtely(descends hillside at steep, 30%, slope).

UTM References

Table with 4 rows (A, B, C, D) and 3 columns (Zone, Easting, Northing) containing UTM coordinate values.

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Owachomo Bridge Trail is bordered on the south by the edge of a flat rock area that at one time was a parking lot and the concrete foundations of a sign(sign now removed). The Trail is bordered on the east and west by lines running generally north to south from the abandoned parking area to the bottom of Armstrong Canyon twenty-five feet beyond the easternmost and westernmost points on the Trail's switchbacks. The Trail is bounded on the north by the bottom of Armstrong Canyon.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries as specified above include the Trail and portions of the historic scene to preserve the setting and feeling of the Trail during its period of significance.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steven F. Mehls and Carol Drake Mehls/ principals
organization Western Historical Studies, Inc. date February 15, 1988
street & number 1225 Atlanris Avenue telephone (303)-666-6208
city or town Lafayette state Colorado zip code 80026

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### METHODOLOGY

Western Historical Studies, Inc., undertook an inventory of all known historic resources within Natural Bridges National Monument as part of Option A of National Park Service contract PX-1200-5-A070. The contract specified that the survey would be limited to historic sites and structures, and not examine prehistoric resources. The only exceptions were four sites, one an archeological dig site, one a prehistoric site intermingled with a historic dump, and two historic inscriptions left at archeological sites. The field work for the survey was undertaken during September and October of 1986. After the field inventory was completed, members of the Western Historical Studies (WHS) staff in conjunction with members of the Branch of Historic Preservation of the National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, evaluated the resources recorded during the survey. From that evaluation resources were either dropped from further consideration, determined worthy of consideration by the Utah SHPO's staff for possible National Register stature, or selected for nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as fifty years old or of exceptional significance and representative of the themes of Natural Bridges National Monument history revealed in the research and writing of the report for phase one of the contract.

The field survey itself was carried out with help from Park staff members with knowledge of the location of historic resources. They escorted WHS's principal investigator to the majority of the sites. This approach saved time and did not hamper the survey effort or its objectivity, as park staff members proved to be valuable in locating or relocating the more than twenty resources scattered throughout the 7,435-acre Monument.

Access to the sites was gained from paved and gravel/dirt roads, and on foot. The results of the field survey identified and recorded twenty-six individual historic resources. From that the evaluation process led to identification of one resource of historic significance. The evaluation of the historic sites was based on identification of the major themes of Natural Bridges' history as outlined in the Monument's history-- Canyonlands National Park, Arches National Park, Natural Bridges National Monument Historic Resources Study, completed by WHS in draft before field work commenced and the criteria for evaluation for the National Register of Historic Places (36CFR60.4).

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The evaluation criteria used in the Natural Bridges project were based on the applicable elements of the National Register criteria as discussed in detail in NRHP Bulletin 15. Specifically, the relevance of each criteria ( A through D ) to the recorded resources was evaluated. What was found was a total lack of applicability of criteria C or D to the resources because of an almost total absence of standing architecture in the park and the fact that the recorded materials offered no potential for significant information. The remaining criteria, A and B were then looked to as routes for evaluation, combined with integrity evaluations per Bulletin 15. The first evaluations were made by determining whether or not an individual resource or district was fifty years old and possessed sufficient integrity of materials, method of construction, location, setting, and an ability to convey its function and character. In addition, the resources had to have a contextural association. Once those standards were met the remaining resources were further evaluated as to identity to established whether or not they were associated with a contribution to a broad pattern of local history or a significant individual. The result was that the bulk of the recorded resources, especially a number of inscriptions and remains of pre and post-World War II ranching activity, were eliminated from further consideration, either because they were not fifty years old, were in such poor condition that their function or materials could no longer be ascertained, or they could not be identified as having a significant contextural or individual association. The resource included in this nomination all met the above criteria under National Register Criteria A.

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of Conrad L. Wirth the National Park Service undertook a massive program, known as MISSION 66, to upgrade and expand America's national parks and monuments. In 1965 that work was completed at Natural Bridges, and along with Canyonlands National Park and Arches National Park, became a cornerstone of southeastern Utah's modern tourist industry.<sup>2</sup>

Long before that point in time Natural Bridges had been in the public eye. President Theodore Roosevelt, after national publicity on the three natural bridges, used the then new Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish Natural Bridges National Monument on April 6, 1908, marking creation of the first national monument or park in Utah. Fifteen years after it was created the first custodian, Zeke Johnson, was appointed to care for the Monument. He took his job to be tour guide, protector, caretaker, publicist, and developer of Natural Bridges. He served from 1923 to 1941. During the mid-1920s he began work on the Owachomo Bridge Trail, and continued to improve it until the mid-1930s. He was assisted in the work by his son and later members of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Trail became not only the main access to Owachomo Bridge, but also the interior of the Monument as the main visitor contact station and ranger station were located near the trail head during the 1920s and 1930s. It remained an active trail until after World War II and the opening of a new trail from the opposite side of the natural bridge.<sup>3</sup> The period of significance for the trail is 1925-1935, the era of construction and early use. This period of significance reflects the active period of trail construction and the years of Zeke Johnson's greatest activity as Monument Custodian. After 1935 the Civilian Conservation Corps activities directed by Johnson at the Monument focussed on other trails and improvements, ending further refinements to the Owachomo Bridge Trail. Overall, active development at Natural Bridges ended during the late 1930s, not to be resumed until ten years after the end of World War II.

The Owachomo Bridge Trail is one of seventeen park developemnt theme related resources recorded during the survey(65% of survey total). It is the most complete resource representing the theme. The other trails and resources from the same period at the Monument have lost their integrity of function and design through natural deterioration and/or removal because as they deteriorated they became threats to visitor safety.

See attached LCS form.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Steven F. Mehls and Carol Drake Mehls, Canyonlands National Park, Arches National Park, Natural Bridges National Monument Historic Resource Study, (Denver: National Park Service, 1986), pp. 144-159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 162-175, 179-186.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 150-152; and Zeke Johnson Files and Diaries, mss on file at Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center.



CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT  
(Attach 4" x 5" Black and White Photograph)

100-8-313

REGION RMRO PARK/AREA NAME Natural Bridge N.M. PARK NUMBER 1349

STRUCTURE NAME Owachomo Bridge Trail STRUCTURE NUMBER NABR - 3

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE Vicinity of Owachomo Bridge PARK LOCATION CODE PG

NATIONAL REGISTER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE:  / / MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: (A) (B) (C) (D)

NPS LEGAL INTEREST FEE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT: NO

Check all of the following categories for which NPS has treatment responsibility:

Stabilization  Cyclic Maintenance  Routine Maintenance  Approved Ultimate Treatment

(ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION USE ONLY)

APPROVED ULTIMATE TREATMENT OR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, CULTURAL COMPONENT DESIGNATION:

Preservation (PP)	Restoration (RR)	Reconstruction (CC)
Adaptive Preservation (AP)	Adaptive Restoration (AR)	Adaptive Reconstruction (AC)
Neglect (NG)	Remove (RM)	No Approved Treatment (NO)

Approval Document \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Document Date:  / /

Estimated Treatment Costs \_\_\_\_\_

Stabilization:	\$ _____	Date: <u> / /</u>	Level of Estimate: (A) (B) (C)
Approved Treatment:	\$ _____	Date: <u> / /</u>	Estimator: (Region) (DSC) (A&E)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Date of Construction: CA / / 1925 Date of Alterations:  / / multiple/routine maintenance  
Architect/Designer: Z. Johnson Historical Theme(s): Park Development (IXD)  
History of Structure: This trail, built by Zeke Johnson and improved by him during his nearly twenty years as custodian of Natural Bridges National Monument. The trail served as late as 1965 as an access to Owachomo Bridge. At that point it was replaced as were many of the trails Zeke pioneered, by a road and new trail built as part of MISSION 66 changes at Natural Bridges.

Evaluation of Structure: Historic Theme Contributing  Non-Contributing \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register Criteria: AX B C D (Include integrity statement)  
The site still retains both its integrity of location and physical integrity. It is passable today on foot and its function is readily apparent even if not walked.

Bibliography: Zeke Johnson Information, Natural Bridges National Monument.

Representation in Other Surveys: NO

If structure has been removed, how? N/A Date:  / /

Report prepared by: S. F. Mehls Date: 9 /24 / 86

Condition: G  
Documentation: G  
Significance: L  
Internal Impacts: L/POP/ERO  
External Impacts: L/POP/ERO

LOCATION: Section Unsurveyed State Utah  
Township 37S County San Juan  
Range 17E

USE: CURRENT INTERIOR USE (NPS 28 CODE) cc/ZZ  
Original Use Hike to Natural Bridge  
Intermediate Uses Hike to Natural Bridge  
PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION (NPS 28 CODE) III

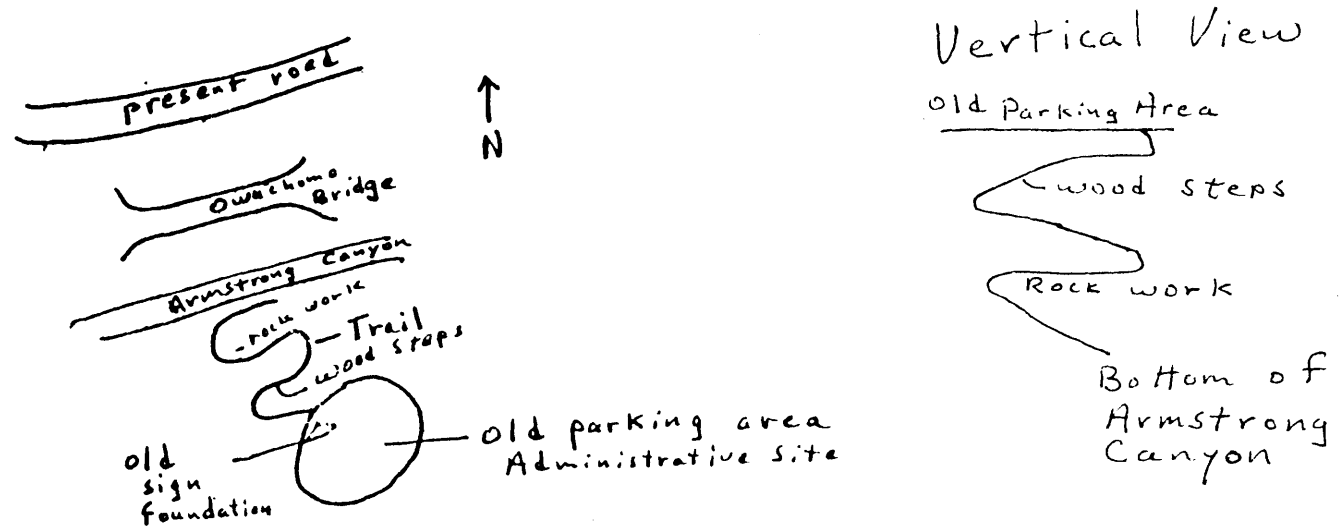
OWNERSHIP: Present Owner: NPS  
Original Owner: NPS  
Intermediate Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_

DRAWING NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
NEGATIVE NO. CAB 17, # 2, 4

\*\*\*PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION\*\*\*

(DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, MAJOR ALTERATIONS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, ETC.)

Type: RD  
Material: EA/ST/WD  
Dimensions: 3' to 6' wide x 1/4 mile



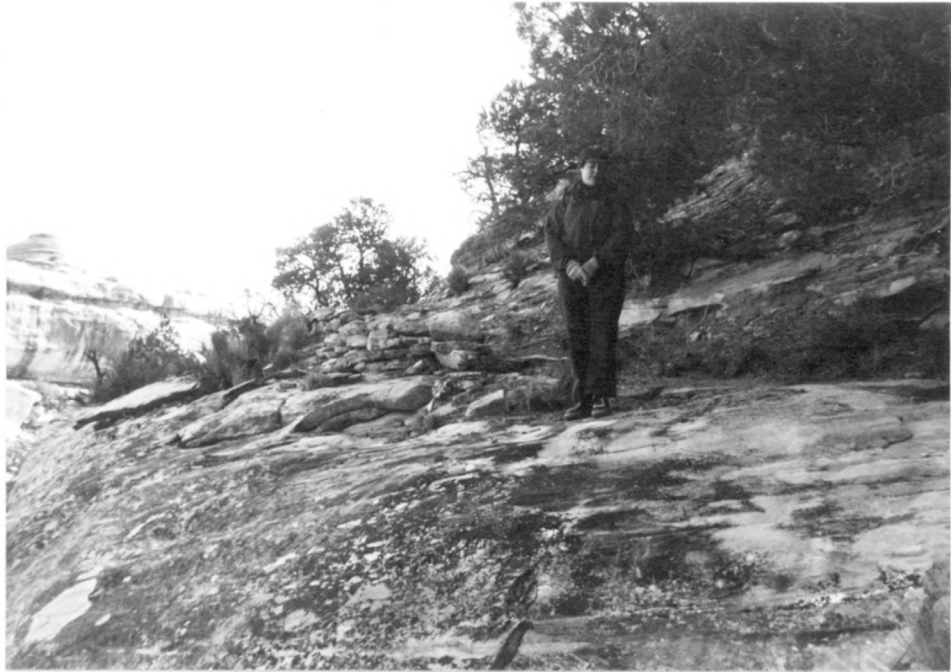
SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES (INCLUDING INTERIOR AND SETTING) FOR PARK PLANNING PURPOSES:



HS NABR 2  
Owachomo Bridge Trail  
SW to NE  
Natural Bridges NP

RMRO

S. Mehlis 2/86



N5  
LOG No NABR-2  
Photo No \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject QUACHNOO BRIDGE TRAIL  
ROCK STEPS  
Description of View NW to SE  
Location of Subject NATURAL BRIDGES  
NP  
Location of Negative RMBD  
By S. Mellis Date 9/86

Roll #17, ~~#4~~ #2