



June 9, 2025

RE: The Shelby Street Footbridge Historic Status Review Request

Dear Historic Districts Review Board:

The Shelby Street Footbridge is one of several footbridges spanning the Santa Fe River. The bridge has been closed since 2022 when it was determined to be unsafe for use. The City of Santa Fe Parks and Open Space Division will undertake replacement of the bridge this year and as part of the process requests a historic status review of the structure.

The bridge was constructed in 1968 and was intended to emulate the National Park Service (NPS) New Deal design to match the rock lining the river which was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The Shelby Street Footbridge was deemed non-contributing to the Santa Fe River Park Channel, a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) property, as the construction of the bridge fell outside of the properties period of significance.

Mr. John Murphey created an HCPI form to detail the history of the footbridge. He recommends the bridge as non-contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic district because of its exclusion from the Santa Fe River Park Channel property and because of its poor quality of construction.

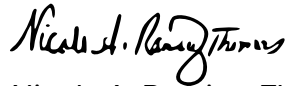
We ask that the board find the structure non-contributing as well because it works to create a false sense of history by trying to emulate the CCC construction along the river park.

In addition to the HCPI form created by Mr. Murphey, the Santa Fe River Park Channel NRHP form is also attached for Board review. The form is provided for context only.

The New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (NM HPD) was contacted on May 1, 2025, to determine if they needed to review the project since it is located within the Santa Fe River Park Channel NRHP property and because the bridge project is partially funded by the

State of New Mexico. Ms. Gretchen Brock, NM HPD Historian and architectural reviewer, stated that they did not need to review the project because the footbridge is non-contributing to the NRHP property and “appears to be highly altered or new construction.”

Thank you,



Nicole A. Ramirez Thomas

Principal/Owner

Wonderstone LLC

Shelby Street Footbridge Project Preservation Consultant

Included in this application:

Letter of Request

Shelby Street Footbridge HCPI Form

Santa Fe River Park Channel National Register of Historic Places Form

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Base Form (FORM 1)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

Date of Form: June 7, 2025

For HPD Office use only:			
HCPI No. _____	District No. _____	NRHP <input type="checkbox"/> SRCP <input type="checkbox"/>	Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D

1. Name of property: Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location: Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District – Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A 4. County: Santa Fe Parcel # 910017966
------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

5. Property Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structures: Bridge <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	
6. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025	
7. Previous Survey Date(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No:	
8. Name of Project: HDRB Status Evaluation	
9. Lat/Long: 35.6850349, -105.9392324	

10. Photo Information: John W. Murphey, photographer. Photo 1: View of east elevation, facing southwest.

11. Brief Description of the Property:

Erected in 1968 by staff of the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Shelby Street Footbridge is an approximately 26-foot-long standard girder-slab span crossing the Santa Fe River (Photo 1). It is dressed with sandstone curtain walls designed to give the appearance of a masonry arch bridge. The bridge was crudely constructed and is now in poor condition, with a major punch-through in the deck and areas of concrete delamination. These issues prompted the City of Santa Fe to close the bridge in 2022 (Photo 2).

Continued on Page 5.

12. Who uses the property? Not in use

13. Construction Date: 1968

Known Estimated Source: Newspaper article

14. Setting:
 Suburban Rural Village Urban If Urban: Commercial Industrial Residential Public: Park

15. Relationship to Surroundings: Similar Dissimilar
 Comments: N/A

16. Additional Perspective: (Photos, drawing, footprint, etc., indicate north arrow when possible)



Portion of Parcel # 910017966 with Shelby Street Footbridge highlighted.

Source: Office of the Santa Fe County Assessor
 Blue parcel lines are not accurate



17. Surveyor:
 (your name, address, telephone number, and any group affiliation)

John W. Murphey
 Architectural Historian
 Architectural History Services
 505-577-7593/707-583-7819
 John@archhistoryservices.com

For: Current owner:

18. Owner (if known) and other knowledgeable people:

Current owner: Assumed to be the City of Santa Fe, though no deed was located for the property, per Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk

19. Is Property Endangered? Unknown No Yes How?

20. Significance to Current Community: Unknown None Low Moderate High
 Describe: Unknown

21. Other Significance or Information of Interest: (such as historical, legendary, structural, former ownership, etc.)
 See Historical Overview.

22. National or State Register:

Is this property individually listed on a historic register? Unknown No Yes
 If yes: State National

If 'no' or unknown, do you think this property is eligible for listing? No Yes
 Why? See Evaluation of Historical Status

23. National or State Historic District: City of Santa Fe

Is this property in a historic district? Unknown No Yes
 If yes: Significant Contributing Non-contributing No Status
 Per City of Santa Fe official designation map

If 'yes', what is the name of the district? State National City of Santa Fe:
 Downtown and Eastside Historic District

24. Supplemental Forms:

None HCPI Detail Form (FORM 2) Continuation Sheets, # pages: _____

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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		4. County: Santa Fe		
		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025		
Bridge Data				
6. Feature Crossed: Santa Fe River 7. Bridge Type: Pre-cast concrete girder-slab with masonry false spandrel wall 8. Total Structure Length: 38' ± 9. Number of Spans: one 10. Main Span Length: 26' ± 11. Main Substructure: Timber abutment (assumed) and stone abutments and bridge seats 12. Deck Width: 4' ± 13. Railing Type: Steel pipe rail				
14. Designer/Engineer: Unknown		Builder/Contractor: New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission Force Account Labor		
15. Modifications: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u> </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u> </u> No known modifications <u>#1 Date: Unknown.</u>				

16. Primary Architectural Style Not Applicable

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Deco/Streamline Moderne | <input type="checkbox"/> Gothic Revival | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Revival | <input type="checkbox"/> Pueblo | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish-Pueblo Revival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bungalow/Craftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> International | <input type="checkbox"/> Neo-Classical | <input type="checkbox"/> Queen Anne | <input type="checkbox"/> Territorial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colonial Revival | <input type="checkbox"/> Italianate | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern NM | <input type="checkbox"/> Ranch | <input type="checkbox"/> Territorial Revival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folk Victorian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mediterranean | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish-Colonial | <input type="checkbox"/> Tudor Revival |

Notes: _x_ Other: Urban style park bridge

17. Documents Available and Their Locations
None: See Documentation Note

SITE:

18. Attached or Associated Properties

Are associated properties eligible for listing: The adjacent channel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, to which the subject is a Non-Contributing resource.

19. Site Plan: Field Sketch, AHS.

Shelby Street Footbridge, Erected 1968

East Alameda Street

CCC Stone Retaining Walls

Santa Fe River

Total Structure Length: 38' ±
Number of Spans: One
Main Span Length: 26' ±
Deck Width: 4' ±

CCC Stone Retaining Walls

Santa Fe River Park Pathway



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Architectural Description Continued

Setting

The Shelby Street Footbridge crosses the river near the base of Shelby Street in downtown Santa Fe. It is positioned above a stone-lined channel constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1930s. Pedestrian walkways, added in the 1950s during the area’s tenure as a state park, flank the bridge on both the east and west approaches.

The bridge lies within a modified riparian corridor where the river has been straightened and channelized. The surrounding context includes a mix of commercial and governmental buildings, reflecting the area’s urbanization from the mid to late 20th century. Mature cottonwoods, willows, and other riparian vegetation provide shade and visual relief, reinforcing the river’s presence as a natural element in an increasingly dense built environment (Photo 3).

Bridge Details

Superstructure

The bridge consists of two precast concrete girders supporting a cast-in-place or integrally cast slab deck (Photo 4). Each girder measures approximately 3 inches wide by 11½ inches high and is T-shaped, flanged into the slab. A later addition—a concrete beam measuring approximately 8½ inches wide by 9¾ inches high—was installed between the girders for supplemental support; however, the beam exhibits noticeable deflection at mid-span. The bridge spans the river at 26 feet, with a total length of approximately 38 feet including approaches.

The exterior features non-structural concrete curtain walls with a false arch profile. It is clad in local sandstone likely intended to mimic a closed-spandrel masonry arch (Photo 1). These false spandrel walls measure approximately 3 inches wide with a variable height and consist of sandstone blocks set into a concrete bed (Photo 5). The blocks exhibit pronounced horizontal striations or bedding planes that visually differ from the limestone channel walls below (Photo 6).

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Similar to a true masonry arch, the false spandrel walls taper toward the center, narrowing from 4 feet at the base to approximately 20 inches at the “keystone”—a small vertical block located at the bridge’s midpoint (Photo 7). This keystone is decorative and non-structural.

Vertical clearance beneath the bridge at mid-span is approximately 73 inches, a limited height that has long raised flood control concerns. In the 1970s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified the bridge for removal due to its inadequate hydraulic capacity.

Substructure

The bridge rests directly on the river embankment, supported by large timber blocks that serve as both abutments and bridge seats.¹ This rudimentary substructure reflects minimal engineering, relying largely on soil mass and timber resistance for lateral stability. The lower abutments and bridge seats are faced with stone for visual effect (Photo 8).

Deck and Approach

The bridge’s deck is formed by the concrete slab. Over time, surface deterioration has exposed the reinforcing steel mat. Near the center of the span, a punch-through has developed, accompanied by widespread concrete delamination.

The 4-foot-wide walkway is bordered on both sides by low sandstone parapets that rise approximately 12 inches above the deck surface (Photo 9). A painted metal pipe railing runs along the edges of the deck, terminating at each end in square masonry end posts approximately 18 inches high, which visually anchor the span.

On the north side, the bridge is approached by a continuation of the concrete slab (Photo 10). Curving stone walls flank this approach, rising from ground level to approximately four feet where they connect with the masonry end posts. On the south side, the original approach was removed to accommodate the widening of the pedestrian path (Photo 2).

¹ Based on a restricted view of the north bank, it is presumed that timber blocks function as the back (or rear) abutment.

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Condition

The bridge is currently in poor condition and shows multiple signs of structural distress. A large punch-through in the deck reveals corroded reinforcing steel (Photo 11). Significant delamination has weakened the concrete surface, and cracks are evident both longitudinally and transversely beneath the deck (Photo 12). Efflorescence—white mineral deposits indicating moisture infiltration—is visible across the underside (Photo 12). These combined issues have compromised the structural integrity of the bridge, leading to its closure by the City of Santa Fe in 2022.

Historical Overview

Introduction

In late April 1968, Lela Wilson—a 28-year-old Clovis native and secretary for the New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission—stood at the center of the recently completed Shelby Street Footbridge. A State Parks photographer captured an image of Wilson, her bouffant hairstyle silhouetted, as she looked out across the Santa Fe River (Fig. 1). The pair had likely walked from the Commission’s new office at 141 East DeVargas Street to take the photo.

The bridge at the time marked the western terminus of Santa Fe River Park and likely replaced a rustic log span erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1934. The new structure, designed to blend with the CCC-built limestone river walls, continued to serve the same essential function: carrying pedestrians across the Santa Fe River. It fulfilled this role until 2022, when ongoing deterioration and substandard construction led officials to deem it a public hazard.

Imagining a River Park

At the start of the Great Depression, New Mexico—like many states—did not have a single state park. With the infusion of New Deal funding and the labor of the Civilian

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Conservation Corps (CCC), the state was able to launch its first formal park program.² In August 1933, Governor Arthur Seligman issued an executive mandate establishing the New Mexico State Park Commission, enabling the state to use CCC labor for park development.

One of these recreation areas fulfilled a long-held ambition to create a linear parkway along the Santa Fe River. The ambitious but ultimately unproductive 1912 Santa Fe Preliminary Plan envisioned a “Paseo del Rio” boulevard and park stretching along the river from Camino Cabra westward to the future St. Francis Drive (Fig. 2).³ With no funding attached to the proposal, the plan failed to materialize.

The river parkway concept resurfaced in the 1920s, when the City of Santa Fe, the Chamber of Commerce, and civic groups such as the Kiwanis and Lions Clubs launched a campaign to establish the Santa Fe River Park.⁴ Although preliminary drawings were prepared, progress stalled due to resistance from property owners unwilling to sell land fronting the river. With the arrival of the CCC, the project resurfaced. An editorial in the *New Mexican* stated the federal program put a “chance in front of [civic leaders] to secure one of the most beautiful parks in the country.”⁵

Building a Riparian Park

In Santa Fe, the Civilian Conservation Corps undertook two state park projects concurrently. In the Sangre de Cristo foothills, CCC crews developed Little Tesuque Canyon—later designated Hyde Memorial State Park—into an all-season recreation area with campsites, stone shelters, a lodge, and a ski run.⁶ At the same time, in the heart of the city, crews from the same camp—headquartered in what would become the Casa Solana subdivision—constructed an urban riparian park along the Santa Fe River, transforming the corridor into a landscaped public space that served both recreational and flood-control purposes. Early plans had envisioned the two parks being connected.

² John W. Murphey, “Santa Fe Historic Context Study: 1610-1986,” Document prepared for the City of Santa Fe (Revised June 4, 2021), 55.

³ *Ibid.*, 56

⁴ “Alleged Catron Obstructs Park Development; Matter to Come Before Council on Wednesday,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 24, 1934, 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Mary Wright Coan, “The New Deal in Little Tesuque,” *New Mexico Magazine* (July 1934), 24-25+.

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The river park would extend nearly two miles along the Santa Fe River, starting at the lower reservoir and moving downstream to a point near St. Francis Drive. Unlike earlier efforts, federal officials assisted in acquiring riverfront parcels, resulting in more than 90 quitclaim deeds made to the State of New Mexico by local landowners.⁷

The project’s primary goal was to straighten and channelize the river for flood control. Until this point, the river routinely flooded, damaging homes and property along its course. A secondary goal was to create an urban recreation area, with a concentration of amenities placed between College Street (now Old Santa Fe Trail) and Shelby Street.

Work on this section began in the spring of 1934 and was largely completed by the end of the year. It included obliterating an ancient acequia and channeling its flow along a raised stone-lined ditch.⁸ By August, CCC crews had constructed stone retaining walls reaching Shelby Street, where they were in the process of erecting a rustic log footbridge over the river.⁹

The bridge provided access to the newly built State Parks Commission headquarters on East DeVargas Street. This Pueblo Revival-style building (Fig. 3), funded with New Deal money, served as the administrative offices for the state park system. It was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a parking lot serving the new State Land Office Building.

A Rustic Log Bridge

An article in the *New Mexican* described the new footbridge as made of large yellow pine logs “nearly two feet in diameter.”¹⁰ Though brief, the description fits what would later be called the National Park Service rustic style of park architecture.

As a CCC project, the design of park structures and furnishings was overseen by the regional office of the National Park Service. During this period, the NPS guided park development through a series of design portfolios that covered nearly every aspect of planning and construction. The effort began in 1934 with a slim volume showcasing

⁷ David Kammer, “Santa Fe River Park Channel,” National Register of Historic Places nomination (Washington, D.C.: June 2008), 9-18, bibliographical entry.

⁸ “Alleged Catron Obstructs Park Development,” 2.

⁹ “Work on River Park,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 13, 1934, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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representative park structures and expanded—under the direction of NPS architect Albert H. Good—into an encyclopedic three-volume set published in 1938.¹¹

As articulated by Good, the Park Service design philosophy sought to promote “through the use of native materials in proper scale, and through the avoidance of severely straight line and over sophistication. . . the feeling of having been executed by pioneer craftsmen with limited hand tools . . . [and by doing so achieve] sympathy with the natural surroundings and with the past.”¹²

For small footbridges in parks, Good recommended the use of logs or stone, noting that such materials “appear more indigenous to our natural parks than spans of steel or concrete.”¹³ His chapter on footbridges included photographs illustrating what the Park Service considered exemplary design. Many of these were rustic log spans, which likely influenced the design of the original Shelby Street footbridge. Unfortunately, no known photographs of that bridge survive, making it difficult to determine its actual appearance.¹⁴

Completing the Park

The erection of the massive retaining walls extended westward beyond the Don Gaspar Avenue Bridge to a point near St. Francis Drive, and was largely completed by 1937. The State Parks Commission envisioned developing the river corridor westward through downtown into a formal park, while preserving the area east of College Street in a more

¹¹ John W. Murphey, “Maryland State Parks: A Survey of Selected State Parks in the Eastern and Western Regions,” (Report prepared for the Maryland Historical Trust, January 31, 2019), 58-59.

¹² Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures, Part I- Administration and Basic Service Facilities* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1938), 176.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ No photographs of the bridge were located at the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (Catie Carl, email communication to John W. Murphey, May 8, 2025). Inquiries with the City of Santa Fe, the New Mexico State Archives, and New Mexico State Parks regarding park records, drawings, and photographs produced no results. It is possible that relevant materials may exist in Record Group 35 at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland. However, the short turnaround time and limited budget for this project did not allow for a NARA records search.

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natural state.¹⁵ How much of this vision was ever fully realized remains unclear. With the major structural work completed, the CCC devoted its final years to installing picnic tables along the grassy strip lining the river between College and Shelby Streets.

By the end of the Depression, New Mexico had established four state parks built by the CCC—but the improved Santa Fe River area was not among them.

Santa Fe’s Unofficial Park

After its completion, the *Santa Fe River State Park*—as it was referred to in the press—fell into a jurisdictional gray area. The park encompassed state-owned land, including the riverbed and narrow linear strips along both banks, but was bordered by city-owned and private properties. These overlapping boundaries created administrative uncertainty, and as a result, the park remained unofficially designated for nearly two decades.

After the conclusion of World War II, the Commission began efforts to improve the Santa Fe River Park. According to a 1947 newspaper account, State Parks Superintendent Charles Roehl planned to enhance the urban stretch by developing footpaths, building rock tables and benches, installing drinking fountains, and planting grass.¹⁶ The project was a joint undertaking by the State Parks Commission, the State Highway Department, and the State Penitentiary, which provided prison labor for the work.

The Santa Fe River Park continued to receive incremental improvements but did not achieve official state park designation until the late 1950s. As of 1954, the New Mexico State Parks Commission operated six officially designated parks: Bluewater Lake, Bottomless Lakes, City of Rocks, Conchas Lake, Kit Carson, and Hyde Park. The Santa Fe River Park, by contrast, remained an unpublicized strip of state-owned land—maintained by the state but not formally recognized or promoted as part of the official park system.

¹⁵ “City and Vicinity Given Preference in Park Work, Says Supervisor,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, March 30, 1937, 4.

¹⁶ “Roehl Tells of Plans to Make River Parkway a Place of Beauty,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, July 15, 1947, 1.

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In its 1954 annual report, the New Mexico State Parks Commission acknowledged the unusual status of the river park running through the heart of the capital. The report flagged the unresolved question of whether the area should be formally designated a state park or incorporated into the South Capitol Complex—a growing cluster of state government offices located south of the river.¹⁷ While the matter remained unsettled, the Parks Commission continued to maintain the river corridor.

In 1957, the Santa Fe River Park was officially designated as a state park. The original unit encompassed only the north bank of the river, extending approximately 0.4 miles from Delgado Street on the east to Shelby Street on the west.

Park Beautification

Beautification efforts began as early as 1953, when state park employees planted lawn and installed picnic tables along the stretch between Cathedral Place and what is now Paseo de Peralta.¹⁸ This initial work was followed by improvements farther west, including raising the streambed and importing topsoil to level the embankments.

Following the park’s official designation, a series of additional improvements were undertaken. The stone retaining walls were raised to accommodate more fill (Fig. 4), new picnic areas with concrete tables and benches were added, turf was planted throughout, footpaths were laid, and signage installed—including an Official Scenic and Historic Marker framed in rustic brown logs. None of the archival sources reviewed—including newspaper accounts and records from the State Parks and Recreation Commission—mention the replacement of the original CCC-built log bridge.

By 1967, a year before the current footbridge was erected, the park featured 18 designated picnic sites (“picnic pits”) and a continuous lawn along the length of its corridor.¹⁹ Ongoing maintenance focused on repairing older log tables and removing dead trees and overgrowth.

¹⁷ New Mexico State Park Commission, *Your State Parks – 1954* [annual report] (Santa Fe: New Mexico State Park Commission, n. pag.); New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Division Records, Folder: "Parks & Recreation Department Publications," New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico (hereafter PRDP).

¹⁸ “A Good Start” [editorial], *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 2, 1953, 4.

¹⁹ New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission, “Welcome to New Mexico State Parks” [foldout brochure], (Santa Fe: State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1967), n. pag., PRDB.

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A Replacement Bridge

The current footbridge was constructed in early 1968, likely replacing an earlier structure—possibly the original timber span built during the CCC era. A February 1968 aerial photograph shows two footbridges crossing the river at the foot of Shelby Street (Fig. 5). By the following year, only the present bridge remained (Fig. 6). The bridge was erected by park personnel under the supervision of Joe B. Rodriguez, then the area supervisor for Northern New Mexico.

The bridge’s design marked a departure from earlier CCC-era standards. Thirty years prior, National Park Service architect Albert H. Good had advised against constructing stone footbridges with a “thin and structurally weak appearance.”²⁰ He recommended a more substantial parapet wall rising above the deck, arguing that such designs maintained a more appropriate “park character” than those capped with “thin ... and more formal cap stone.”²¹ The new bridge, by contrast, featured a tapering false spandrel and a low parapet wall—elements that contradicted Good’s guidance and lent the structure a more urban profile.

Its completion was marked with a photograph in the local newspaper (Fig. 1), although the project went unmentioned in the State Parks and Recreation Department’s internal newsletter. It did, however, appear in the background of two promotional films produced in the late 1960s to advertise New Mexico’s state parks (Fig. 7).

The State Park’s Final Years

The 1960s enhanced park was marketed by the state as an urban recreational amenity, focused on strolling and picnicking. A 1977 park brochure described the space as “a serene retreat in the center of Santa Fe for visitors and local residents.”²²

The New Mexico State Park and Recreation Commission continued to maintain and improve Santa Fe River State Park through the 1990s. In 1999, the City of Santa Fe and the State of New Mexico entered into a joint powers agreement to support the park’s

²⁰ Good, *Park and Recreation Structures, Part I*, 192.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission, “New Mexico State Parks: Santa Fe River & Hyde Memorial” [foldout brochure], (Santa Fe: State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1977), n. pag., PRDB.

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1. Name of property: Shelby Street Footbridge	2. Location: Over Santa Fe River Downtown and Eastside Historic District -Santa Fe	3. Local Reference Number: Santa Fe ID: N/A			
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		5. Date of Survey: May 20, 2025			

ongoing maintenance and future development.²³ The work was reviewed by the City’s Public Works Committee and ultimately evolved into the River Trail and Greenway Improvement Project.

The City hired Wilson and Company to prepare a master plan for the park’s future development. This work included expanding the park westward and constructing pedestrian and bicycle trails from Delgado Street to Defouri Street under the Santa Fe River Downtown Urban Trail Project. As part of the project, the width of West Alameda Street was reduced to allow for a wider and more gradual embankment from Defouri Street to St. Francis Drive. Improvements to the park have continued through the use of Capital Improvements Program funds.

When a Footbridge Becomes a Liability

Calls to remove the Shelby Street Footbridge began in 1983, following a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to channelize a section of the Santa Fe River west of Don Gaspar Avenue using heavy concrete retaining structures. The Corps’ initiative was prompted by an earlier flood study predicting that a 100-year event could submerge Shelby Street and surrounding areas under five feet of water.²⁴ The Corps had been involved with the Santa Fe River since 1957, when a major flood destroyed numerous bridges and riverfront businesses.

As part of the study and following project, the Corps identified several bridges in need of improvement or replacement, including the Old Santa Fe Trail and Defouri Street vehicular bridges, as well as pedestrian crossings like the Shelby Street Footbridge.²⁵ Each of these bridges had been determined to have a flow capacity of 2,100 cubic feet per second or less—insufficient to withstand a 100-year flood event.

As a cost-sharing arrangement, the City of Santa Fe was responsible for replacing the bridges. However, nearly all available funding was directed toward the replacement of the Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge, a high-volume crossing the city had identified in 1975 as a top priority. Its replacement turned into a costly and protracted effort that took several

²³ Edward Vigil (City of Santa Fe), phone message to John W. Murphey, May 30, 2025; various notices of public meetings published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 1998–2000.

²⁴ Sam Atwood, “River Flood Plan Under Attack,” *The New Mexican*, May 5, 1983, A-7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, “River Plan Presented Wednesday,” *The New Mexican*, May 3, 1983, A-7.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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years to complete. With most of the city’s budget directed to the Old Santa Fe Trail crossing, other river spans were not affected by the project, including the Shelby Street Footbridge.

The Shelby Street Footbridge avoided replacement for another 40 years. However, in 2022, with its concrete deck visibly deteriorating, the City of Santa Fe permanently closed the bridge in August after a civil engineering assessment raised safety concerns.²⁶ The structure has remained closed since.

In November 2024, the Santa Fe Governing Body approved the use of \$240,000 in state capital outlay funds to design a new structure to replace the aging and structurally deficient bridge.²⁷ This HCPI is a step in the process of replacing the bridge.

²⁶ Nathan Lederman, “Deteriorating Footbridge in Downtown Santa Fe Closed,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, October 15, 2022, A-1 and A-4.

²⁷ Carina Julig, “Contract Extends Capital Outlay Appropriations,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 19, 2024, A-8.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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Evaluation of Historical Status

The Shelby Street Footbridge was designated a Non-Contributing resource in the 2008 Santa Fe River Park Channel National Register of Historic Places district nomination. That nomination encompassed the immediate park development along the river, including the CCC-era stone retaining walls and other features. The rationale for the bridge’s non-contributing status was that it fell outside the district’s period of significance, ending in 1940, and that it did not stylistically fit with the National Park Service design aesthetic of the New Deal era.

While the nomination did not reference Albert H. Good’s guidance, it is clear—based on his principles quoted above—that the bridge does not embody the Park Service Rustic ideal. Its lean profile and pipe railing lack the form and naturalistic materials associated with that design philosophy.

Given its previous designation, and its poor quality of construction, the recommendation is to designate the Shelby Street Footbridge a Non-Contributing structure to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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Documentation Note

No CCC or National Park Service architectural drawings related to the original bridge or associated structures were located in local archives. However, such materials may exist within Record Group 35 (Civilian Conservation Corps) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland. Additionally, no drawings or plans were found for the 1950s state park improvements or for the construction of the 1968 footbridge. The following collections were reviewed, with relevant materials noted below:

Local Collections

New Mexico State Archives and Records Center

A. Civilian Conservation Corps, New Mexico District Records

Citation Number: Collection 1959-030

Dates: 1935–1942

B. New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Division Records

Citation Number: Collection 1979-010

Dates: 1939–[ongoing]

C. Governor Arthur Seligman Papers

Collection: 1959-102

Series: Correspondence – New Mexico Park Commission

Citation: Series [not specified], Folder 70, Box 3

D. Governor Clyde K. Tingley Papers

Collection: 1959-104

Series: Correspondence – New Mexico State Park Commission

Citation: Series [not specified], Folder 45, Box 2

E. Map Collection

Citation Number: Collection 1959-296

Series: Santa Fe – City

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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F. New Mexico Historical Film Collection

- **Santa Fe River State Park**
Citation Number: Collection 1959-000, Item 11472, Serial No. 11472
- **Santa Fe River State Park**
Citation Number: Collection 1959-000, Item 21628, Serial No. 21628
- **New Mexico State Parks**
Citation Number: Collection 1959-000, Item 11553, Serial No. 11553
Date: Circa late 1960s

City of Santa Fe, Land Use Division

No records

City of Santa Fe, Parks and Open Space Division

No records

New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

National Register of Historic Places files (transferred to NMCRIS)
 Backing information for the Santa Fe River Park Channel NRHP missing

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Library

Santa Fe/Santa Fe River Materials
 No material relevant to the park or bridge

New Mexico State Parks

No records or knowledge that Santa Fe River Park was a state park

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)
Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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Illustrations

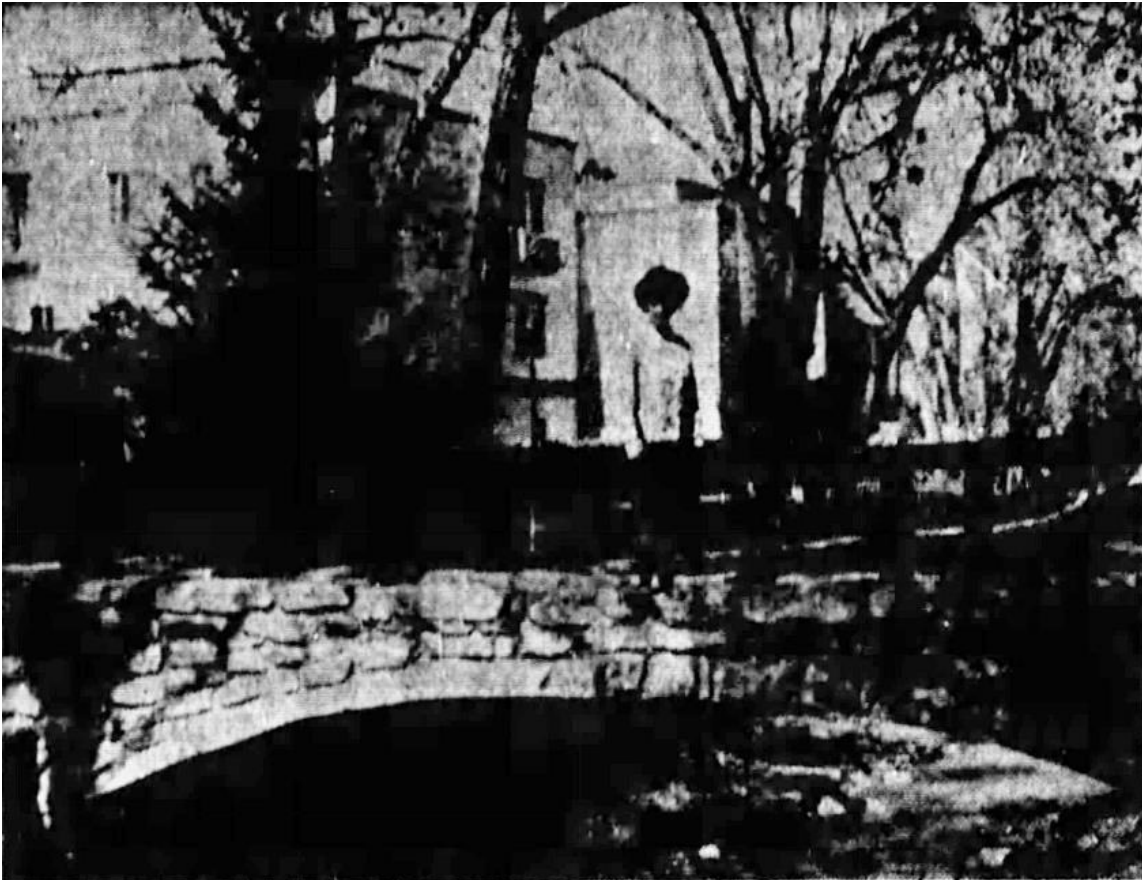


Figure 1: Lela Wilson stands at the center of the recently completed Shelby Street Footbridge, April 1968. Courtesy of the Santa Fe New Mexican.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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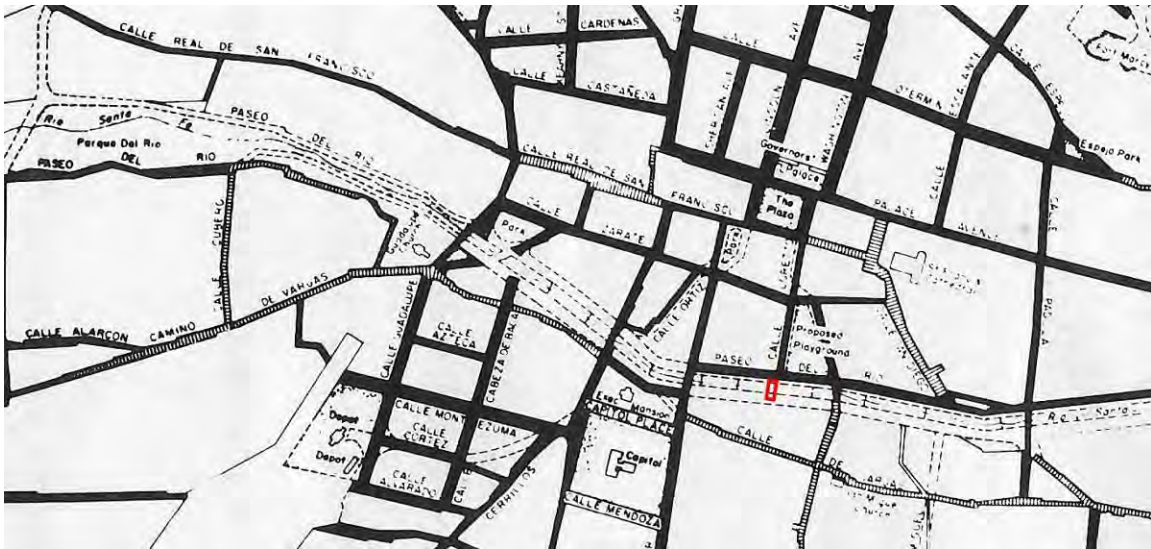


Figure 2: Portion of 1912 plan showing the proposed Paseo del Rio boulevard and river park. Site of future footbridge highlighted N. L. King, “Map of the City of Santa Fe, Showing Street, Park and River, Improvements Proposed by the City Planning Board,” 1912.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

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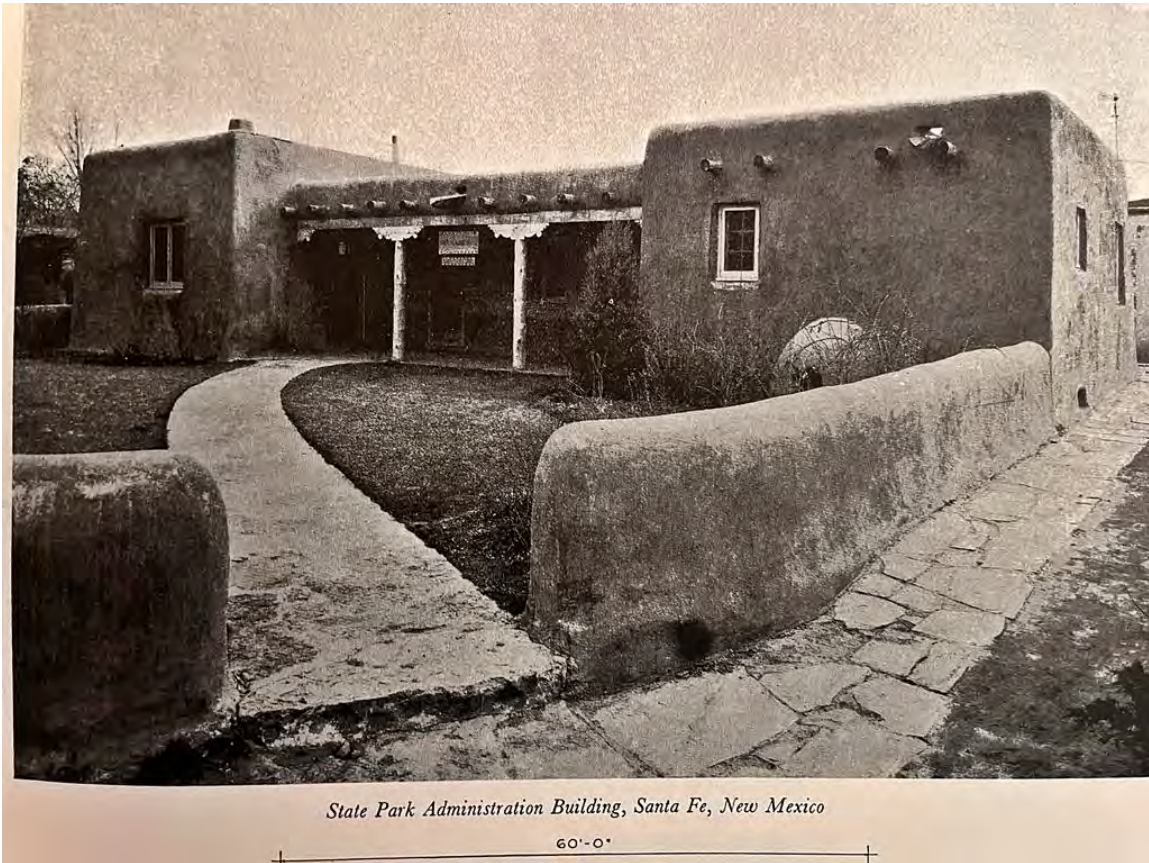


Figure 3: Original State Park Administration that sat on the south side of the river across CCC-built log footbridge. The building was destroyed in the early 1960s create parking for the new State Land Office Building. Courtesy of Princeton Architectural Press.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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Figure 4: Contemporary photograph showing where the river retaining walls were extended in the early 1950s to create the Santa Fe River Park.

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Figure 5: February 2, 1968, aerial photograph showing two bridges at the Shelby Street crossing. A. is the bridge erected 1968; B. is likely the CCC -constructed built in 1934.

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Figure 6: February 27, 1969, aerial photograph, showing the completed current bridge.

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Figure 7: Still taken from late 1960s State Parks and Recreation Areas Commission promotion film with Shelby Street Footbridge in the background. Repeat shot taken June 1, 2025. Original photograph of the Courtesy of the New Mexico State Archives Records Center.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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Survey Photographs

(All images taken by John W. Murphey on May 20, 21, 22, and June 1, 2025.)



Photo 2: South approach. Camera facing north.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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Photo 3: River and channel context. Camera facing west.

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Photo 4: Bridge superstructure: A: exterior false spandrel walls, B. girder-slab beams C. reinforced center beam. Camera facing north.

Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI) Detail Form (FORM 2)

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Photo 5: Interior stonework of false spandrel wall.

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Photo 6: Exterior stonework of false spandrel wall.

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Photo 7: Crown of false spandrel wall with “keystone” highlighted.

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Photo 8: Substructure at south embankment stone abutment and bridge seat, and what appears to be timber support. Camera facing south.

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Photo 9: Deck and railing. Camera facing south.

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Photo 10: North approach. Camera facing south.

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Photo 11: Deck showing punch-through, delamination, and exposed rebar mat.

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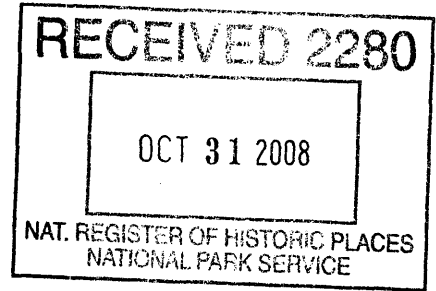


Photo 12: Deterioration to structural members, including severe delamination and exposed rebar on the beam, along with longitudinal cracking and efflorescence across the slab.

(Oct. 1990)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



1181

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Santa Fe River Park Channel
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Alameda

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: _____ **NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A**
CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe **VICINITY: N/A**
STATE: New Mexico **CODE: NM** **COUNTY: Santa Fe** **CODE: 049** **ZIP CODE: 87504**

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally
___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kathleen Slick

Signature of certifying official

27 October 2008

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
___ 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): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper *Edison K. Beall* Date of Action *12-10-08*

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: private; public-local; public State

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Structure

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	0	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	7	10 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	7	10 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: One. The associated Don Gaspar Bridge is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (02001163)

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: *The Historic and Architectural Resources of the new Deal in New Mexico*

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: Landscape: park
Natural feature: river
Government: public works (channel improvement)

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: Landscape: park
Natural feature: river
Government: public works (channel improvement)

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Other

MATERIALS: **FOUNDATION:** STONE
WALLS : STONE
ROOF N/A
OTHER: CONCRETE

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-12).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Social History; Landscape Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1933-1940

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1933; 1940

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Civilian Conservation Corps

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-13 through 8-17).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-18).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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 #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: New Mexico State Parks

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 6.9 acres

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing
1. (East terminus)	13	0416996	3948872
2. (West terminus)	13	0414920	3949414

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see contention sheet 10-19)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see contention sheet 10-19)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: David Kammer, Ph.D.

ORGANIZATION: consulting historian

DATE: June, 2008

STREET & NUMBER: 521 Aliso Dr. NE

TELEPHONE: (505) 266-0586

CITY OR TOWN: Albuquerque

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 87108

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see enclosed *Santa Fe, NM* USGS quadrangle map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-20 through Photo-21)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS N/A

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: List of property owners maintained by the Historic Preservation Division

STREET & NUMBER:

TELEPHONE:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Description

The Santa Fe River State Park and adjacent city-owned riparian park to the east extend approximately 1.5 miles along the Santa Fe River between the bridges at Don Gaspar Street and Camino Cabra. Central to this section of urban greenway is the masonry structure lining much of the river's banks that dates to its construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1933 and 1940. Comprised of masonry retaining walls and culverts lining the channel of the river and naturalistic rock weirs within the streambed, the structure has been a defining characteristic of this urban park since its construction. It continues to imbue it with a high degree of integrity as to location, setting, workmanship, materials and design associated with the CCC's only urban park project in New Mexico. Varying in width from approximately 15 to 45 feet and in height from approximately four to eight feet, the structure is bounded by random-coursed limestone masonry walls and encompasses approximately 6.9 acres as it extends through the heart of the city of Santa Fe. Over the seven decades since its construction, the river channel has undergone periodic flooding. As a result, a few small sections of the original masonry wall have been replaced and others silted so that sediment covers the lower courses of some wall sections. Measures to stabilize riverbanks have also resulted in the construction of small-scale revetments and the addition of concrete abutments adjacent to bridges. One bridge constructed prior to the completion of the CCC project and five other public vehicular bridges cross the park as do three private vehicular and two smaller pedestrian bridges. The 1928 Delgado Street Bridge, gaining eligibility during the period of significance, contributes to the historic resource. The Don Gaspar Bridge, built in 1934 as part of a related project, was previously listed in the National Register. Although the design of the remaining bridges is generally complementary to the feeling of an urban riparian greenway, they are considered noncontributing. Contributing to the resource are three associated weirs and two masonry culverts. Each of these structures is distinctive enough in design to contribute to the structure as a whole.

Setting

Heading at Santa Fe Lake in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains northeast of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe River flows 20 miles south and then southwest through the city of Santa Fe and then another 25 miles southwest to just below Cochiti Pueblo where it empties into the Rio Grande. The source of local water supply dating to prehistoric settlement, in 1880 the river was dammed above the city and continued to provide both drinking water and irrigation for Santa Fe's farmers who drew the water from gravity-based canals, or *acequias*, that diverted at higher elevations east of the city.

Although Santa Fe's plaza is just two blocks to the north of the river, by the 1930s the State Capitol, the Governor's Mansion, and several residential neighborhoods lay to the south with the river dividing the city. With the river subject to periodic flooding, especially during the cloudbursts that accompanied the Southwest's summer monsoon season, civic leaders began to envision ways of reducing the river as a threat. At the same time, New Deal planners sought to use the wooded riparian strand, or *alameda*, as a means of linking the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

downtown on the north bank with the growing state government complex on the south bank. With funding available from New Deal programs, they developed a plan to contain the river by channeling it in a deepened bed with its banks lined with masonry walls and to add park amenities along its banks.

Following the creation of the New Mexico State Parks system in 1933 and the state's acquisition of private lands abutting the river, work on a river park fell within the purview of the CCC. Over the next six years CCC companies assigned to SP-1-N in Santa Fe worked on the park project, generally alternating their efforts between nearby Hyde State Park at a higher elevation in the summer and the river park in the winter. The results of these efforts remain most apparent in the one and a half-mile greenway extending from Camino Cabra, the structure's eastern boundary to Don Gaspar Bridge, its western boundary.

A Structure with Varied Urban Settings

Over its mile and a half course, the river park passes through three distinct urban settings. Lining the river's entire course along the north side is Alameda Street, also partially developed by the CCC. The north side of Alameda Street offers a good indicator of the transition of urban settings through which the park passes. Although not as discernable from the masonry structure, the line of buildings along the south bank of the park reflects a similar transition. The park system's easterly section, extending 0.9 miles from Camino Cabra to the Delgado Street Bridge passes through a residential neighborhood that is a part of Santa Fe's Eastside Historic District.

Sympathetic with the regional architecture within the district and the neighborhood's rustic setting, the park retains a naturalistic character with heavy vegetation and a riparian trail lining much of the structure. The middle section, extending 0.3 miles from the Delgado Street Bridge to Paseo de Peralta Bridge offers a transitional zone in which lodgings and small offices are mixed with residences.

Now within the boundary of the Santa Fe River State Park, which continues to its western boundary, the structure is lined along its north boundary by a narrow greensward with benches and picnic tables. The south boundary of the structure is sometimes abutted by buildings, some predating the creation of the park. Its masonry wall, broken in a few small sections by abutments protecting those buildings, reflects the long history of the river's periodic flooding.

The westerly section, extending 0.3 miles from the Paseo de Peralta Bridge to the east side of the Don Gaspar Bridge, passes through downtown Santa Fe with offices, businesses, apartments and government buildings lining the structure on both sides of the river. The greensward lining the structure along the north side offers several picnic tables and benches that are popular with downtown workers and tourists. Here the width of the channel between the masonry retaining walls is at its widest, often as much as 45 feet, and the wall achieves its greatest heights, rising in some areas eight feet to the landscaped grounds lining the structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Section 7 Page 7

The Channel Landscape: East-to-West

Constructed after the period of significance the bridge at Camino Cabra marks the point at which the Santa Fe River transforms from a meandering mountain stream to a waterway set within a man-made channel (Figure 7-1). Just to the west of the bridge's concrete abutments, rough-faced ashlar limestone walls approximately 30 feet apart define both banks of the river. Heavy growths of small willow trees, periodically removed by local residents and city park personnel, fill much of the river's floodplain, obscuring clear views of the masonry walls. Along the south wall for a length of approximately 75 yards, a few residents whose properties border the masonry wall have constructed elevated walls atop the structure, using a variety of construction materials ranging from river cobbles to stucco-faced concrete block. These additions terminate at the eastern boundary of the city's Monsignor Patrick Smith Park where a concrete slab bridge offers access to the park south of the river.

For 0.3 miles extending westward from the bridge at the park to the East Palace Avenue Bridge the masonry walls continue on both side of the riverbed. While the height of the walls in this area is approximately four feet, silting along the north side has resulted in earthen slopes extending upwards from the riverbed to within one or two feet of the top of the masonry walls. This silting also has obscured a section of the north wall extending approximately 100 yards east of the Palace Avenue Bridge where only occasional limestone rocks appear through the earthen incline that rises from the riverbed to the grade of the land bordering the structure. Although most properties along the south bank of the river are accessible from Canyon Road to the south, a private wood pony-truss bridge crosses the river, and, in some instances, courses of river cobbles have been laid on the top of the south wall. South of the bridge at Smith Park the heavy stand of willows in the floodplain gradually gives way to a more open riverbed with cottonwoods growing along the outer perimeter of the structure providing a canopy. Alameda Street comes closest to the masonry structure in the vicinity of the East Palace Avenue Bridge with only an intermittent footpath available to pedestrians along the north bank.

The structure retains its most pristine setting in the half-mile section of the greenway westward from the East Palace Avenue Bridge to the Delgado Street Bridge. A sidewalk and wooded buffer separate it on the north side from Alameda Street, and a pedestrian walkway parallels the structure on the south side. Cottonwoods comprise much of the canopy with evidence of recent xeriscaping efforts along the pedestrian walkway. The floodplain contains less vegetation than farther upstream and is marked by some of the CCC-constructed weirs that contribute to the structure's naturalistic feeling. Most notable of these weirs is the approximately four feet waterfall (the "Falls") appearing a quarter mile west of the Palace Avenue Bridge. Set in a concave arc about 45 feet in diameter, a seven-course naturalistic limestone structure narrows the waterway to eight feet, creating a waterfall with a pool at the base. Due to its design and important function along the channel, the "Falls" and two other weirs are considered contributing resources to the nominated structure.

Notable also along this section of the structure are two arched masonry culverts along the north wall that extend under Alameda Street. The more easterly culvert, approximately 100 yards east of the waterfall, is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

approximately eight feet in diameter at its base and rises in height to approximately five feet. The masonry culvert just to the east of the Delgado Street Bridge has been truncated by the concrete slab bridge along Alameda Street so that its only its eastern wall remains. With limestone masonry similar in facing and random coursing to the walls lining the river, the channels entering these culverts permit occasional floodwaters from the steep escarpments north of East Palace Avenue, less than 200 yards to the north, to drain into the river channel.

Toward the western end of this section further evidence of periodic flooding and efforts to stabilize the channel is evident. A two-tier gabion lines the south bank of the river for approximately 200 yards, and inclined concrete abutments extend some 25 yards away from the Delgado Street Bridge along the south bank. Overall, however, the integrity of the structure remains high not only with regard to materials, workmanship and design but to preserving the feeling of an urban riparian greenway.

The Delgado Street Bridge, a concrete beam constructed in 1928, marks the end of the city-owned river park to the east and the beginning of the Santa Fe River State Park to the west. Reflective of a transitional area with greater pedestrian traffic, a more formal greensward with a maintained lawn and sidewalk offers park benches and picnic tables in the grassy strip paralleling the north wall of the structure. West of the Delgado Street Bridge's concrete abutments, the structure's masonry retaining walls remain largely intact, increasing in height to about six feet. The greater height of the walls also offers greater evidence of the project's efforts to imbue the manmade stonework with a naturalistic feeling. Although some coursing of the masonry is evident, the variety of stone size and the avoidance of four contiguous corners gives the wall the natural, informal feeling.

Approximately 0.3 miles to the west the Paseo de Peralta Bridge crosses the structure. West of this bridge, the final 0.3 miles of the structure, terminating at Don Gaspar Street Bridge, are set in downtown Santa Fe with shops, restaurants, and offices lining the north side of Alameda Street. South of the structure's south wall, the Castillo Apartments are accessible over a private vehicular bridge. Evidence of the ongoing commitment to preserve the legacy of the CCC's park project currently appears in the reconstruction of a collapsed 25-yard section of the masonry wall. Farther west, the Shelby Street footbridge offers pedestrian access to a pathway along the south bank of the river. Just before reaching the Don Gaspar Street Bridge, the path passes in front of the New Mexico Supreme Court Building, constructed as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project in 1937. The masonry wall structure ends at the east side of the Don Gaspar Street Bridge, constructed under the New Deal's National Recovery Municipal Program in 1934.

While the north wall of the structure extends largely intact for this entire length of the westerly section of the property, the south wall has is broken for a distance of approximately 100 yards. Composed of walls consisting of cobble or concrete or cobble revetments, the break reflects previous efforts to protect private lands adjacent to the eroding riverbank before the CCC project. A motel, located at the southeast corner of where the Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge crosses the structure was once the site of the Orchard Campground, an early tourist

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

camp. There, a concrete block and cobble wall abuts a building on the motel property that predates the creation of the river park, recalling an earlier era in which the river often flooded and private owners with adjacent land constructed walls for flood protection (Figure 7-2).

In the seven decades since the CCC constructed the Santa Fe River Park, the *Alameda* has continued to serve its intended purpose of an urban riparian park linking the north and south banks of the city. Recurring floods and the city's growth, especially the capitol complex south of the river, have prompted changes that have somewhat altered the park's initial appearance. These measures, including the installation of rip-rap and revetments to reduce flooding and the construction of four bridges over the park, however, have not substantially reduced the integrity of the masonry retaining structure that comprised the heart of the CCC project.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Section 7 Page 10

Table of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources (East-to-West)

Resource #	Resource Name	Year of Construction	Resource Type	Contributing
N/A	Masonry Channel	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
1	Camino Cabra Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
2	Monsignor Smith Park Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
3	Private Vehicular Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
4	Palace Avenue Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
5	Masonry Culvert # 1	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
6	"Falls" Weir #1	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
7	Masonry Culvert # 2	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
8	Delgado Street Bridge	1928	Structure	Yes
9	Private Vehicular Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
10	Paseo de Peralta Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
11	Weir # 2	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
12	Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
13	El Castillo Bridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
14	Brother's Lane Bridge Footbridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
15	Shelby Street Footbridge	Post-1940	Structure	No
16	Weir # 3	c.1933-1940	Structure	Yes
17	Don Gaspar Bridge (02001163)	1934	Structure	N/A, previously listed in National Register

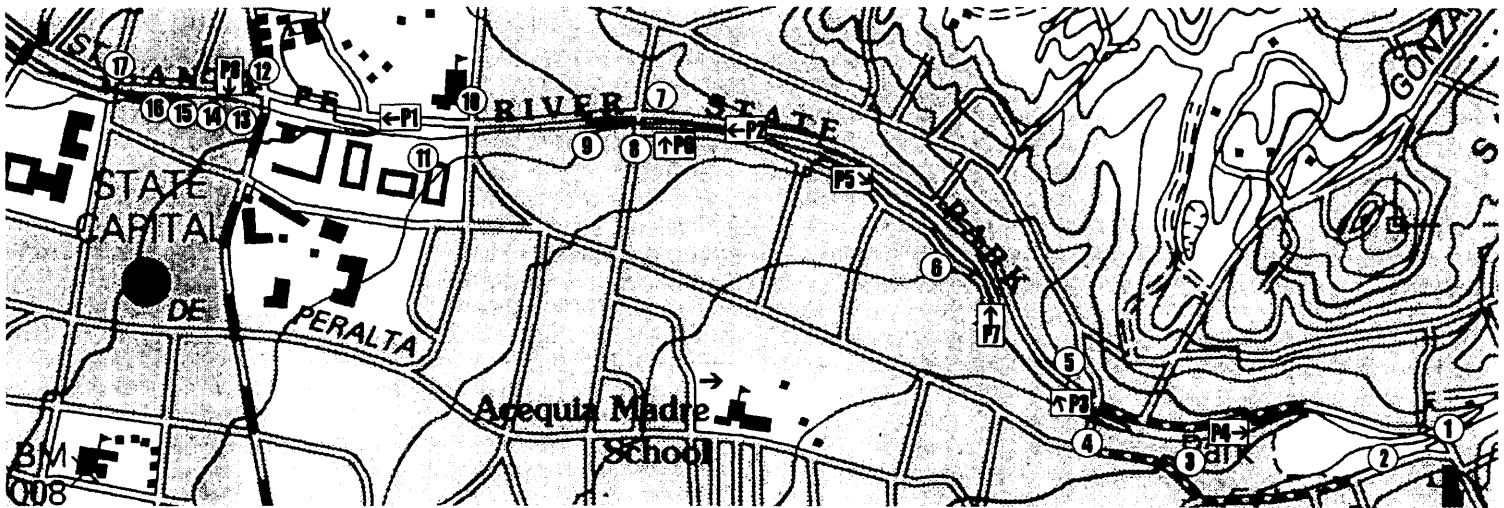
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Section 7 Page 11

Figure 7-1: Sketch Map (not drawn to scale)



Legend

1. Camino Cabra Bridge (NC), East Terminus
2. Monsignor Smith Park Bridge (NC)
3. Private Vehicular Bridge (NC)
4. Palace Avenue Bridge (NC)
5. Masonry Culvert # 1 (C)
6. "Falls" Weir #1 (C)
7. Masonry Culvert #2 (C)
8. Delgado Street Bridge (C)
9. Private Vehicular Bridge (NC)
10. Paseo de Peralta Bridge (NC)
11. Weir # 2 (C)
12. Old Santa Fe Trail Bridge (NC)
13. El Castillo Bridge (NC)
14. Brother's Lane Footbridge (NC)
15. Shelby Street Footbridge (NC)
16. Weir # 3 (C)
17. Don Gaspar Bridge (N/A), West Terminus



North

→ Photograph and direction
C = Contributing resource
NC = Non-contributing resource

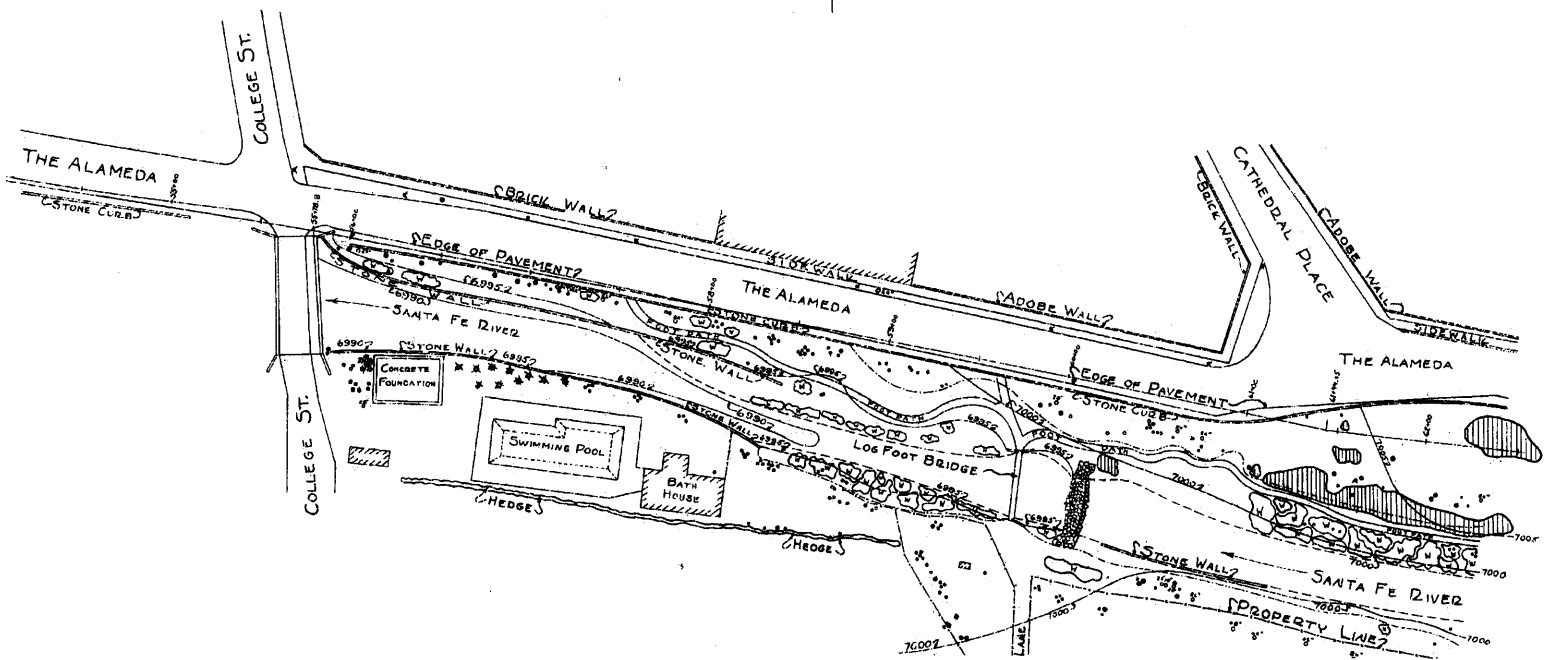
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Section 7 Page 12

Figure 7-2: Topographic Map of River Showing Existing Conditions Before Channel Improvement. Note existing stone wall at southeast corner of College Street Bridge. (Source National Park Service, State Park Emergency Work, January 22, 1935, Drawing No. 9-1-E).¹



¹ No construction plans were found in regional state or federal depositories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Statement of Significance

Like many states, New Mexico had no state park system prior to the advent of the New Deal. When federal programs, especially projects undertaken by the CCC, became available to states with park systems, New Mexico quickly responded, creating a State Park Commission and designating several parks that were then developed by the CCC. Among them were Hyde Park in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains just northeast of Santa Fe and Santa Fe River State Park. Because of Hyde Park's close proximity to Santa Fe, the two park projects moved ahead, more or less in tandem, with a CCC company stationed at Camp SP-1-N in Santa Fe working at Hyde Park in the summer and at the river park in the winter. A goal of Santa Fe leaders since statehood in 1912, the creation of a river park offered several benefits to Santa Fe, including flood control, a riparian urban park, and a landscaped *Alameda* that would beautify the emerging complex of state government buildings south of the river. Central to the project was the straightening of the river and the construction of masonry retaining walls lining riverbanks intended to reduce the threat of seasonal flooding. Between 1933 and 1940 the CCC quarried and faced limestone rocks and used them to construct masonry walls, culverts and weirs that comprised the principal structure of the park project. Although CCC workers also contributed to the eastward extension of Alameda Street and provided the first generation of park amenities such as picnic tables, it is the structure redefining the riverbed that remains the CCC's most indelible legacy along the Santa Fe River. The Santa Fe River Park Channel is eligible under Criterion A for its association as a New Deal project. It is also eligible under Criterion C as a good example of the CCC's efforts to protect natural resources and features and for its naturalistic use of rockwork to harmonize manmade development with natural surroundings.

In 1609 when Pedro de Peralta, the newly appointed governor of the Spain's royal province of New Mexico, relocated the colonial capital from San Gabriel to Santa Fe, the availability of water from the Santa Fe River was a leading consideration in his selection of the site. Over the next three centuries, the Santa Fe River generally vindicated Peralta's decision, but in years of heavy rains also demonstrated its capacity for destructive flooding. In 1872, during a particularly destructive flood all of Santa Fe's wagon and footbridges were swept away as the river swelled to a "reef-like front six feet high" (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 20 1872:1). To equalize the ebb and flow of the river, the citizens of Santa Fe had long advocated damming the river above the city. Except for earthen, stone and brush diversions for the acequias carrying water to houses and fields along both banks of the river, the first impoundment of the river's water occurred only in 1880 when Stone Dam was completed. Over the next seven decades a series of four dams were constructed to provide the city with water and to reduce the threat of flooding. Despite these measures, periodic flooding continued as in May 1919 when flood conditions extending from Santa Fe southwest to La Bajada prompted a writer to declare, "The Santa Fe River is running riot" (*Santa Fe New Mexican* May 24, 1919:1).

In 1912, when Mayor Arthur Seligman formed the Santa Fe Planning Commission to define the city and its economic future, commissioners adopted a unique version of the City Beautiful movement, calling for a "city different" that would emphasize its traditional architecture and its historic winding streets. Also included in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

plans, depicted in the map N.L. King prepared for the commission, were proposals for several city parks, including Fort Marcy Park, the Federal Oval and Parque del Rio. The latter was envisioned as a linear riparian park extending over two miles from the city's pump house near the eastern boundary of the masonry structure to a point near where the intermittent waters of Mascaras Arroyo flow into the Santa Fe River. Despite these ambitious plans and citizens' efforts in the 1920s to realize the plans, little progress was made on Parque del Rio (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, Nov. 11, 1933:1).

It wasn't until the creation of the CCC that the now 20-year old proposal for a river park became reality. In August 1933, just a prior to his fatal heart attack, now Governor Arthur Seligman issued an executive mandate creating the New Mexico State Park Commission. Doing so enabled New Mexico to take advantage of CCC labor available to state park systems under the New Deal's State Park Emergency Conservation Program (SPECP). To satisfy the requirements of the SPECP, it was necessary that the CCC's work be in park on lands owned by the state. To accomplish this goal within the city of Santa Fe where the meandering course of the river resulted in numerous private land holdings abutting the river, citizens organized a public meeting. To demonstrate their support for a park, land owners stood and announced a donation of portions of their land to the State of New Mexico for use as "a park or parkway in connection with the system of state parks in the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico" (Pablo Griego Quit Claim Deed, 1934). Inspired, in part, by the precedent of Talbot Babbit Hyde donating land for nearby Hyde State Park, each announcement was greeted with applause (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, Nov. 11, 1933:1).

This outpouring of public support prompted State Park Commissioner Jesse Nusbaum to note that with the state securing park land within the city, Santa Fe became "the one exception in the United States where a CCC camp is located within city limits." Echoing Nusbaum's enthusiasm for Santa Fe's prospects of an urban state park, the *Santa Fe New Mexican's* editorial described the citizens' actions as "magnificent." Moreover, it proclaimed Santa Fe "the pioneer...in a state park movement" and saw "no reason why this should not now be made the most beautiful 'different' state capital in America" (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, Nov. 11, 1933:4).

As plans began to develop regarding the park, two key figures emerged. Serving as a technical adviser for CCC Company 833 was Carlos Vierra. A leading proponent of preserving Santa Fe historic character through reviving its traditional architecture, he advocated the park project as a means of creating landscapes sympathetic with the surrounding built environment. Representing the New Mexico Planning Board as plans developed was S.R DeBoer. Formerly Denver's city planner who had overseen the creation of its municipal park system, DeBoer had also planned Boulder City, Nevada, the community that grew out of the massive Hoover Dam Project, and had directed capital landscaping projects in Boise, Idaho and Cheyenne, Wyoming. In New Mexico to advise the state's Planning Board, DeBoer had begun to formulate plans for the capital complex south of the river, envisioning a gradual stepping of new government buildings up to the State Capitol (now the Bataan Building). DeBoer's plan included an attractive river park with the PWA-financed New Mexico Supreme Court Building (01001468), located on a slight terrace just south of the riverbank, facing on it. The varied character of the river park, ranging from its more naturalistic character in its eastern section to its more

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

formal composition fronting the court building suggests how the park's development reflected both men's visions.

With a third of New Mexico's lands held by the federal government, the state was the location of over 100 CCC camps between 1933 and 1942 when Congress voted to terminate the CCC. The companies located at these many camps brought great benefits to New Mexico not only with the projects they undertook but with money the CCC spent in nearby towns for equipment and volunteers' incidentals. Despite these positive attributes, however, camps often faced uncertain futures. CCC administrators in Washington D.C., seeking to juggle requests for new projects often transferred companies from camp to camp and themselves were subject to the uncertainties of continued congressional funding for the CCC.

Within this context of uncertainty and relocations, Camp SP-1-N, located a mile and a half northwest of Santa Fe's plaza, was unusual. Unlike most other camps in the state, it was in proximity to an urban area. Moreover, it served as the headquarters for two companies between the fall of 1933 at least until the end of 1936, resulting in a camp of over 450 men. Company 836, consisting of men from Texas and Oklahoma as well as New Mexico worked under the auspices of the Soil Conservation Service until it was transferred to Fort Stanton, New Mexico in late 1936. Company 833, consisting of New Mexicans from the northern part of the state, worked under the auspices of the National Park Service, alternating work seasonally between the higher Hyde Park in warm months and the Santa Fe River in cool months (CCC Annual 1936:58-65).

Although newspaper accounts provide periodic reports of the progress made on the river park project, a helpful overview of the ongoing work in late 1935 appears in a letter that Governor Clyde Tingley sent to Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work for the CCC. Concerned that the camp would be "discontinued and disbanded" in January 1936, Tingley informed Fechner that much of the park project along the river was a work in progress and that to abandon it would be both a "serious detriment" and "dangerous to the public safety" (Tingley CCC Correspondence, 1935: letter dated Dec. 12, 1935).

Describing the project, Tingley noted that plans had been completed for a one and a half mile park along the river and that the river's "stream bed...is being straightened at several points." Although some of the native limestone masonry walls had been installed and others were "already started and footings excavations made," he warned that "large piles of native lime stone are strewn about the park area awaiting placement in walls, dams, culverts, etc." He also cited the "incomplete" construction of naturalistic rock weirs to check flooding, asserting that only when completed would they "control flood waters" and "enhance the scenic features of the river development." He further warned of dangers to the public in the form of holes already dug to plant "five thousand native trees and shrubs...in the river park area." Finally, appealing to economic considerations, Tingley noted that "all of the essential materials for the construction and completion of unfinished projects have been purchased and are on hand."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Section 8 Page 16

The details Tingley presented offer a concise description of how the project was seeking to complete an urban riparian park that would meet several of the aesthetic sensibilities advocated in projects sponsored under the National Park Service. Dating to the landscape architect William Jackson Downing's advocacy of preserving natural areas and using design to produce picturesque landscapes, a succession of designers had sought to manipulate rockwork to create naturalistic appearances of manmade projects. This desire to replicate nature flourished in the during the back to nature movement of the 1910s and 20s, and became a part of design specifications for both national and state park projects undertaken by the CCC. These designs included the creation of scenic features, the use of naturalistic techniques in rockwork, and the planting of native vegetation to erase scars of construction, all included on a modest scale in the CCC's efforts along the Santa Fe River.

Supporting Tingley's request to continue the project was New Mexico's congressional delegation. Three month's later, Representative John J. Dempsey announced that the "state park camp of Santa Fe will be retained," and the CCC remained at the camp until the end of 1940 (*Santa Fe New Mexican* March 4, 1936:3). Over the next four years the CCC completed the masonry retaining walls and the two major culverts along the northern wall that permitted floodwaters to drain from the steep escarpments just north of East Palace Avenue. Workers also completed the installation of several small weirs that were intended to enhance the scenic beauty and natural appearance of the river even as its former channel had been straightened. With work completed on the structure, in its final years the CCC installed picnic tables in the grassy strip lining the river in the vicinity of the downtown near the Don Gaspar Street Bridge and the New Mexico Supreme Court Building. At the same time, the CCC moved ahead with a related project, extending Alameda Street eastward from Delgado Street to its current eastern terminus at Camino Cabra.

As the United States turned more attention to preparing for a likely entry into World War II and even the training of CCC volunteers began to approximate training for military duty, the CCC began winding down by 1940, ending two years later. Compared to other camps in New Mexico, Camp SP-1-N in Santa Fe had a notably long tenure, accounting for the creation of two of New Mexico's first state parks. While Hyde Park represented a more traditional approach to park development and contributed to Santa Fe's growing reputation as a year-round recreational center, the Santa Fe River Park represented an uncommon example of CCC involvement in the creation of an urban park. Set within a city and catering to varied needs from preserving natural settings to providing limited park amenities in a downtown setting, the park achieved both.

Ironically, some of the landscape plans incorporated into the design of the park proved less successful than initially envisioned. The plans to straighten the river channel and to contain it with retaining walls proved to be an inadequate flood control measure during times of heavy cloudbursts. The river's capacity for flooding was demonstrated in August 1957, prompting a series of studies by the Army Corps of Engineers during the 1960s and 70s. These resulted in proposals to alter the river's channel, giving it a concrete-lined V form. In the late 1960s, further recommendations for altering the river park came from the city's urban renewal program. As a result of these developments, the river park west of the Don Gaspar Street Bridge was significantly altered

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

with a concrete was installed and the City of Santa Fe developing its own Santa Fe River Park as a part of the DeVargas Urban Renewal Project (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, March 31, 1968:A-4).

During the debate regarding the future of the Santa Fe River east of the Don Gaspar Street Bridge, however, public sentiment rested strongly with preserving the character of the river and its landscape structure much as the CCC had rendered it. Although improvements, including the construction of revetments and gabions and the raising of some masonry walls, were completed to stabilize the river channel, the CCC structure extending 1.5 miles to the east retains a high degree of historic integrity as well as a good deal of public support for maintaining it.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 18

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 19

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundary of the nominated property is indicated on the accompanying USGS quadrangle map. It consists of a 1.5-mile long masonry channel outlining the course of the Santa Fe River between the west side of the Camino Cabra Bridge at the east terminus and the west side of the Don Gaspar Bridge at the west terminus. The width of the channel varies between approximately 15 to 45 feet. The north and south boundaries encompass the outer edges of the masonry retaining walls that generally line both sides of the riverbank between the east and west boundary points. The nominated boundary includes only the area between the walls and the structure's immediate setting of ten feet.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The boundary includes the remaining section of the parcel historically associated with the CCC-constructed Santa Fe River Park Channel structure and excludes adjacent commercial and residential development and park infrastructure established after the period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 20

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

PHOTO LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted.

Santa Fe River Park Channel

Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Photographer: David Kammer

May, 2008

Location of Negatives: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Photo 1 of 8

Western terminus of property, Don Gaspar Bridge

Facing west

Photo 2 of 8

Walls and adjacent greensward

Facing west

Photo 3 of 8

Riparian vegetation

Facing west

Photo 4 of 8

Private vehicular bridge and wall addition

Facing east

Photo 5 of 8

Naturalistic rockwork and weir, "Falls"

Facing east

Photo 6 of 8

Concrete and masonry culvert at E. Alameda and Delgado Street Bridge

Facing north

Photo 7 of 8

Masonry Culvert #1

Facing north

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

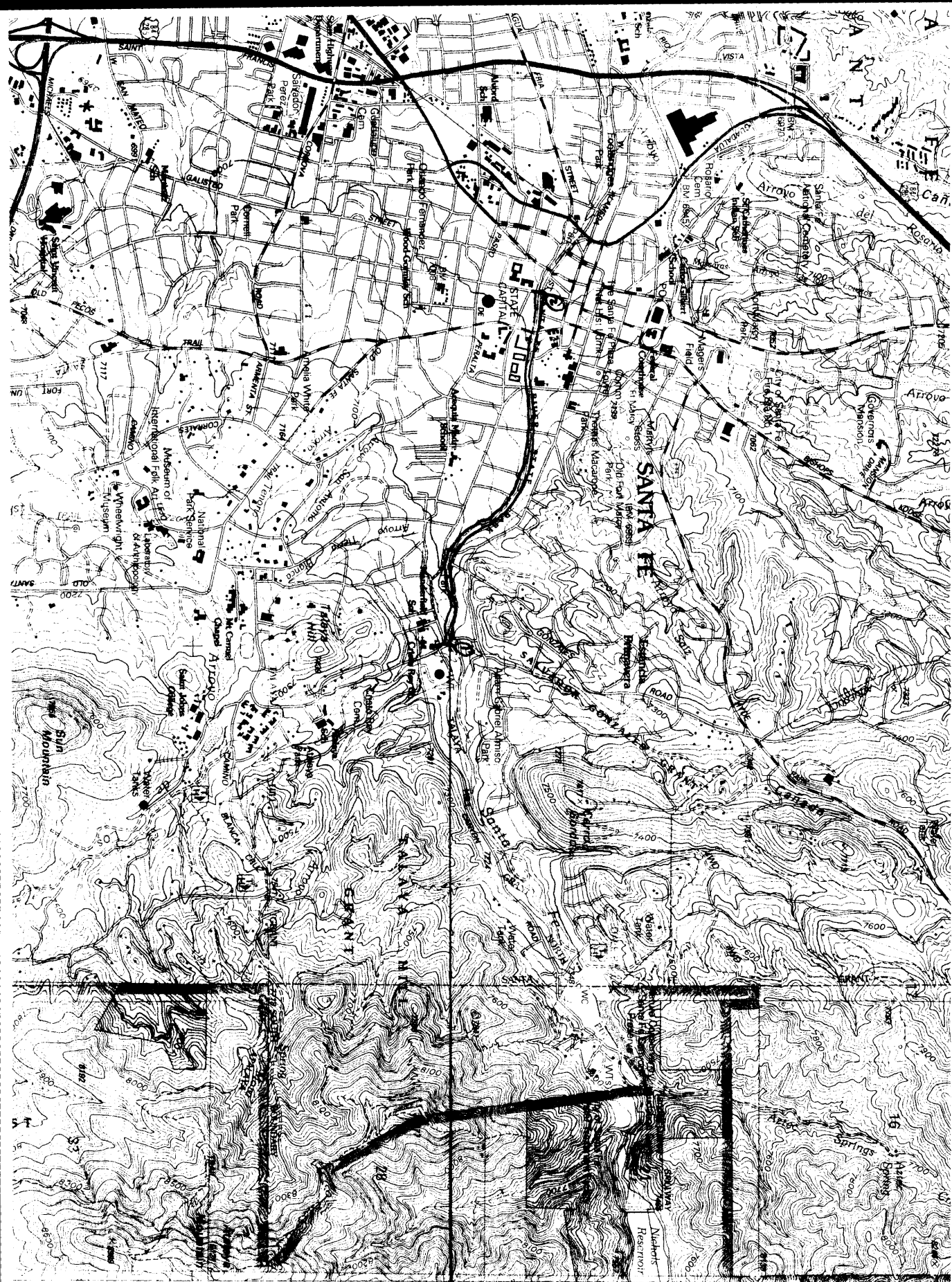
National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 21

Santa Fe River Park Channel
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Photo 8 of 8
Repair of masonry wall
Facing south



Santa Fe River
 Park Channel
 Santa Fe, Santa Fe
 Co, NM
 UTM coord. mark
 3948 15
 1.0416996 E
 3948 72 N
 2.0414920 E
 3949 14 N
 3947