
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2008



City of Rocks
City of Rocks National Reserve



City of Rocks

City of Rocks National Reserve

City of Rocks National Reserve concurs with the findings of the CLI, including the management category and condition assessment as identified below:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: **A: Must be preserved and maintained**

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: **Fair**



Superintendent, City of Rocks National Reserve

8/18/08
Date

Please return to:

Erica Owens
Cultural Landscape Inventory Co-coordinator
National Park Service
Pacific West Regional Office
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-1060

CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE

Idaho SHPO Consensus Determination of Eligibility

Actions Requested:

1) SHPO concurrence that the landscape characteristics as identified in the CLI contribute to the historic character of the City of Rocks (see the following landscape characteristic descriptions in the Analysis and Evaluation section of the CLI: Natural Systems and Features, Land Use, Spatial Organization, Circulation, and Archeological Sites):

I concur X, I do not concur _____ that the landscape characteristics as described in the CLI contribute to the historic character of the City of Rocks.

2) SHPO concurrence on the period of significance in the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI). The period of significance for the City of Rocks cultural landscape has been broadened from existing documentation to more accurately reflect the full extent of the development and utilization of the California Trail through the City of Rocks. The period documented in the CLI is 1843 to 1882. (See the Statement of Significance for more detail.)

I concur X, I do not concur _____ that the period of significance for the City of Rocks cultural landscape is 1843-1882, as documented in the CLI.

3) SHPO concurrence with the boundary description for the City of Rocks cultural landscape, which was drawn to encompass only those lands within the NHL District boundary that are NPS-owned or cooperatively managed lands, as well as lands acquired by the NPS since the establishment of the NHL District (see Boundary Description in the CLI).

I concur X, I do not concur _____ with the boundary established for the City of Rocks cultural landscape as described in the CLI.

Reasons/comments why any 'Do Not Concur' blocks were checked:

Deputy
Suzi Pungilly
Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer

9/23/08
Date

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Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Cultural Landscapes Inventory – General Information

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a database containing information on the historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved inventory records when all required data fields are entered, the park superintendent concurs with the information, and the landscape is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through a consultation process or is otherwise managed as a cultural resource through a public planning process.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures (LCS), assists the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2001), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two goals are associated with the CLI: 1) increasing the number of certified cultural landscapes (1b2B); and 2) bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (1a7). The CLI maintained by Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, WASO, is the official source of cultural landscape information.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated and approved at the regional level. Each region annually updates a strategic plan that prioritizes work based on a variety of park and regional needs that include planning and construction projects or associated compliance requirements that lack cultural landscape documentation. When the inventory unit record is complete and concurrence with the findings is obtained from the superintendent and the State Historic Preservation Office, the regional CLI coordinator certifies the record and transmits it to the national CLI Coordinator for approval. Only records approved by the national CLI coordinator are included on the CLI for official reporting purposes.

Relationship between the CLI and a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR)

The CLI and the CLR are related efforts in the sense that both document the history,

significance, and integrity of park cultural landscapes. However, the scope of the CLI is limited by the need to achieve concurrence with the park superintendent resolve eligibility questions when a National Register nomination does not exist or the nomination inadequately addresses the eligibility of the landscape characteristics. Ideally, a park's CLI work (which many include multiple inventory units) precedes a CLR because the baseline information in the CLI not only assists with priority setting when more than one CLR is needed it also assists with determining more accurate scopes of work.

In contrast, the CLR is the primary treatment document for significant park landscapes. It, therefore, requires an additional level of research and documentation both to evaluate the historic and the existing condition of the landscape in order to recommend preservation treatment that meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties.

The scope of work for a CLR, when the CLI has not been done, should include production of the CLI record. Depending on its age and scope, existing CLR's are considered the primary source for the history, statement of significance, and descriptions of contributing resources that are necessary to complete a CLI record.

Inventory Unit Description:

Located in south central Idaho, the City of Rocks National Reserve encompasses 14,407 acres of land, which includes National Park Service as well as state and privately owned property. Of the total acreage, the NPS owns approximately 9,520 acres, while the remaining land is held by the State of Idaho and private owners. Designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964, the City of Rocks is nationally significant for its association with overland migration and the California Trail. This CLI provides an additional level of detail describing the setting, feeling and association of the landscape, which contributes to the significance of the NHL district. In addition to its designation as an NHL, the City of Rocks was also designated as a National Natural Landmark (NNL) in 1974.

Reflecting themes associated with westward migration and the California Trail, the City of Rocks is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of history. The period of significance begins in 1843 when the City of Rocks became a landmark for emigrants traveling along the California and Salt Lake Alternate Trail. The period extends to 1882 when wagon traffic through the area began to decrease.

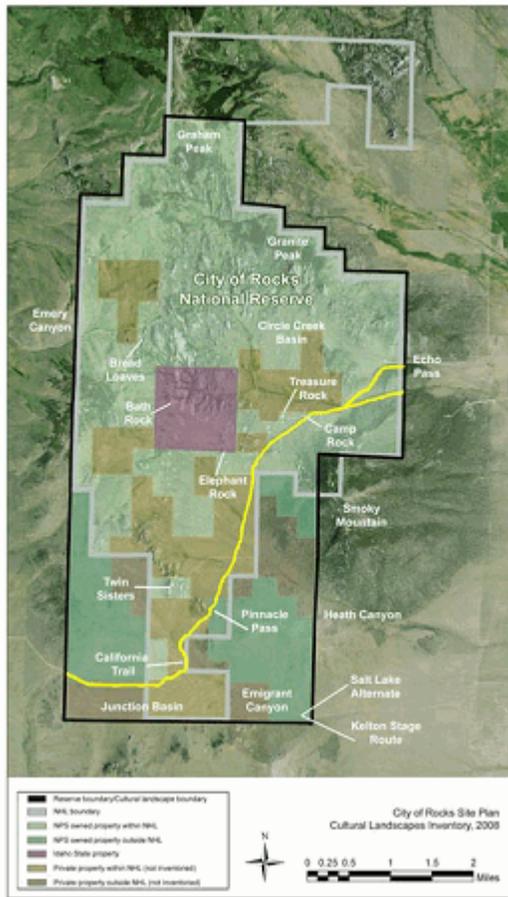
Characterized by a largely open scene punctuated by unique geologic features, the historic site is defined by remnants of the California Trail era. Today, trail ruts remain visible throughout a significant portion of the City of Rocks. Furthermore, monolithic granite rocks located within the boundaries of the reserve still bear the inscriptions of emigrants illustrating the rich history of the locale. Traces of later periods of activity, which included homesteading, dryland farming, mining, and ranching also appear as ruins within the landscape. While these potential archeological sites may be significant at a local level, they do not contribute to the California Trail era period of development.

Principal landscape characteristics include natural systems and features, land use, spatial organization, circulation, views and vistas and archeological sites. Those features associated with trail remnants,

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emigrant inscriptions and views remain as character defining features associated with the California Trail era of development in the City of Rocks National Reserve. As a result of the cumulative assemblage of features associated with the California Trail and overland migration through the City of Rocks, the historic site still conveys its historic character and has integrity.

Site Plan



The boundary of the cultural landscape follows the boundary of the reserve (black line). See Appendix for larger version of the site plan.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	City of Rocks
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	400004
Parent Landscape:	400004

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code: City of Rocks National Reserve -CIRO
Park Organization Code: 9606
Park Administrative Unit: City of Rocks National Reserve

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Incomplete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Field work was conducted in June 2006 by Mike Hankinson and Anna Tamura. The report was written and prepared by Anna Tamura and Cortney Cain.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 08/18/2008

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Boundary Description

The boundary for the City of Rocks cultural landscape follows the boundary of the City of Rocks National Reserve.

Boundary Justification

City of Rocks was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964. The NHL boundary was revised in 1987 to encompass 12,480 acres that includes both publicly and privately-owned lands. The City of Rocks National Reserve was established in 1988 and encompasses 14,407 acres of publicly and privately-owned lands. The NHL boundary and the reserve boundary are not identical. The NHL boundary extends beyond the reserve boundary to the north. Conversely, the reserve boundary extends beyond the NHL boundary to the east and the west in the southern half of the area.

The City of Rocks cultural landscape boundary follows the reserve boundary to:

- 1) exclude the northern portion of the NHL because NPS policy prohibits CLI efforts to extend beyond boundaries of the reserve, and
- 2) include lands that are outside the NHL boundary, but within the legislated reserve, because these lands are associated with the historic significance of City of Rocks.

Land ownership within the cultural landscape boundary is characterized by a checkerboard pattern of public and private lands. Of the 14,407 acres within the boundary, 9,520 acres are NPS-owned, 640 acres are Idaho State-owned (managed in cooperation with the NPS), and 4,247 acres are privately-owned. Only those lands that are owned or managed by the NPS have been inventoried in this document. (See Site Plan for details.)

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State and County:

State: ID

County: Cassia County

Size (Acres): 14,407.00

Boundary UTMS:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	276,264	4,667,304
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	276,222	4,665,679
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,049	4,665,594
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,042	4,665,221
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,838	4,665,188
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,830	4,664,787
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	278,225	4,664,773
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	278,228	4,664,347
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	279,445	4,664,315
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	279,359	4,660,661
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,707	4,660,741
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	277,579	4,655,446
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	272,709	4,655,501
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	273,031	4,665,850
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	273,839	4,665,830
USGS Map 1:100,000	Area	NAD 83	12	273,862	4,666,638
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Area	NAD 83	12	274,671	4,666,607

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GPS-Differentially
Corrected

Area

NAD 83

12

274,687

4,667,388

Location Map:



The boundary for the City of Rocks cultural landscape follows the boundary of the City of Rocks National Reserve (NPS PWR Staff, 2008).

GIS File Name: C:\My Documents\CITY OF ROCKS\DOQ_Aerials_GIS\GIS\boundary

GIS File Description: The ArcGIS file is located on the computer hard drive of PWR-Seattle Historical Landscape Architect, Cortney Cain. Data used in the project was obtained from PWR-Seattle GIS files.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 07/01/2008

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Landscape features associated with the California Trail located within the boundaries of the City of Rocks National Reserve meet management criteria under Category A – Must be Preserved and Maintained. The landscape meets the necessary requirements for management under this category as a result of its association with the reserve’s legislated significance and its designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL).

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

Type of Agreement: Cooperative Agreement

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

On November 18, 1988, Congress passed the Idaho-Arizona Conservation Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-696). The Act created a new unit of the National Park System known as City of Rocks National Reserve. The Act further directed the Secretary of the Interior to transfer management and administration to a unit of local government. On May 2, 1996, the NPS transferred those authorities to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation through a perpetual cooperative agreement. The agreement is periodically modified by the partners to include new programs and best management practices (Keck, 2008).

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Explanatory Narrative:

The City of Rocks National Reserve includes 9,520 acres of National Park Service land.

Public Access:

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Explanatory Narrative:

As a result of privately owned land located within the boundaries of the reserve, unrestricted access is limited to publicly owned land within the authorized reserve boundary.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Description:

Privately and publicly owned lands located adjacent to the boundary of the reserve contribute to the historic character of the California Trail era landscape. Remaining largely undeveloped, many of these properties contain segments of the California Trail as well as other features associated with westward migration. In addition, adjacent lands provide glimpses of iconic views and vistas, which would have played an important role in the emigrant experience. As a result, adjacent lands that border the reserve contribute to the setting, feeling and association of the California Trail era of development in the City of the Rocks.

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Inadequately Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

City of Rocks was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on July 19, 1964, and is listed under theme X, "Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898," subtheme D, "Western Trails and Travelers," facet 4, "California Trails and Settlement of California." The NHL boundary was revised on August 6, 1987, to encompass 12,480 acres (CMP, 104).

In 1997 additional efforts were taken to supplement the existing NHL documentation; however, due to its extensive scope, the Idaho SHPO did not concur. According to correspondence, the features associated with the agricultural landscape did not have enough significance or integrity to be nationally recognized in association with the California Trail. Please see SHPO letter in the Supplemental Information section.

Despite the documentation that was completed in 1997, the cultural landscape and its associated landscape characteristics and features have not been adequately documented. This CLI provides an additional level of detail describing the setting, feeling and association of the landscape, which contributes to the significance of the NHL district.

Existing NRIS Information:

Primary Certification Date: 10/15/1966
Other Names: City of Rocks

National Register Eligibility

Contributing/Individual: Individual
National Register Classification: District
Significance Level: National
Significance Criteria: A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	AD 1843 - 1882
Historic Context Theme:	Developing the American Economy
Subtheme:	Trails and Travelers
Facet:	California Trails And Settlement Of California
Time Period:	AD 1843 - 1882
Historic Context Theme:	Peopling Places
Subtheme:	Westward Expansion of the Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
Facet:	Western Trails And Travelers

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category	Area of Significance Subcategory
Transportation	None
Exploration - Settlement	None

Statement of Significance:

Introduction

Located in south central Idaho, the City of Rocks National Reserve encompasses 14,407 acres of land. The National Park Service (NPS) owns approximately 9,520 acres, while the remaining acreage is owned by the State of Idaho and private parties. The landscape is defined by the dramatic setting and associated features, which served as the backdrop for the California Trail era. The reserve also contains remnants of the settlement era and associated agricultural and grazing traditions. Designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964, the City of Rocks is nationally significant under theme X, “Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898,” subtheme D, “Western Trails and Travelers,” facet 4, “California Trails and Settlement of California. Significant dates associated with the 1986 NHL nomination include the period from 1862 to 1882, reflecting utilization of the City of Rocks by California Trail and Boise-Kelton stage coach traffic. In addition to its designation as an NHL, the City of Rocks was also designated as a National Natural Landmark (NNL) in 1974 and as a National Reserve in 1988.

As a result of additional research and fieldwork, the CLI has broadened the period of significance for the City of Rocks cultural landscape to begin in 1843 when the area became a landmark for emigrants traveling along the California and Salt Lake Alternate Trail. The period extends to 1882 when emigrant traffic in the area decreased. The proposed period of significance has been modified from existing documentation because the previous dates do not accurately reflect the full extent of the development and utilization of the California Trail through the City of Rocks as it fails to include the earliest use of the California Trail in the reserve.

The City of Rocks is significant under Criterion A, exhibiting national significance for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The historic site reflects numerous periods of occupation and subsequent development, beginning with transportation related uses associated with the California Trail, the Boise-Kelton stage coach and railroad lines. Later, the City of Rocks was utilized by settlers who engaged in agriculture, mining and cattle grazing before transitioning to present day recreational activities. Remnants of the agricultural, mining and settlement periods are evident within the reserve, but they do not contribute to the cultural landscape because they are outside the period of significance. It should be noted, however, that these features are compatible with the reserve's legislative intent to protect the historic rural setting and they may be found to be locally significant within a broader context in the future. Due to the lack of sufficient information concerning the significance of the agricultural and settlement resources within the reserve, the CLI focuses solely on themes associated with westward migration and the California Trail. (See the Supplemental Information section for correspondence from the Idaho SHPO concerning the eligibility of the settlement and agricultural periods of development.)

Criterion A

In association with westward migration and development of the California Trail, the City of Rocks cultural landscape is significant under Criterion A. Exhibiting national significance, the City of Rocks is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. According to sources, the California Trail was "the longest, most heavily traveled, and most significant route of westward overland migration in 19th century American history" (CMP 1994, 102). Having direct correlation with the westward migration of hundreds of thousands of people traveling along the California Trail; today, trail remnants in the City of Rocks are some of the largest and best preserved in any National Park Service unit (RMP 1996, 2-19).

Additional significance is derived from the setting, feeling and association of the City of Rocks landscape. Serving as a significant landmark along the California Trail, the City of Rocks provided weary travelers with a moment of rest or respite from the often arduous trail conditions. Defined by its unique geologic rock formations and open expanses, the City of Rocks landscape provided emigrants with awe inspiring scenery and views. Today, these viewsheds remain unimpaired, exhibiting integrity and allowing contemporary visitors with the opportunity to experience a landscape similar to what emigrants experienced over 150 years prior while traveling along the California Trail.

Historical Context

The following paragraphs related to the historical background of westward migration are adapted from the Historic Resources Study (HRS), pages 24-29:

The first party to travel overland to California came from Platte County, western Missouri. In 1841, the 69 men, women, and children were encouraged by returned trapper Antoine Robidoux who described a "perfect paradise, a perennial spring." They were led by John Bidwell and John Bartleson and further assisted by trapper Thomas Fitzpatrick and Jesuit priest Father De Smet. The Bidwell-Bartleson party

followed the Oregon Trail as far as Soda Springs (near present day Pocatello, Idaho). Here, half the party opted for Oregon. The remainder abandoned their wagons and proceeded southwest across the tortuous, alkali “Bonneville Flats” north of the Great Salt Lake, along the trail blazed by Jedediah Smith in 1827 and Joseph Walker in 1833.

Other parties followed by alternative routes: via Santa Fe, via Oregon, and, in 1843 via City of Rocks/Granite Pass, by way of the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall. This later party traveled under the leadership of Walker and Joseph B. Chiles, a member of the Bidwell-Bartleson party of 1841. At the confluence of the Raft and Snake rivers, Chiles and “a few companions” proceeded west along the Snake, to the Malheur River, and thence south to California. Walker and the remainder of the party proceeded up the Raft River, to the City of Rocks, west to the Goose Creek range, to a wagon pass at Granite Pass – a route destined to become the main overland road to California.

By the late 1840s, the route through the City of Rocks had been well established and heavily utilized as a result of its key location. According to Merle Wells, “...no other practical route to California was available south of City of Rocks and Granite Pass, so emigrant traffic using earlier Fort Hall or later Hudspeth Cutoff or Salt Lake alternate routes all had to come through the reserve” (NHL 1986).

The California Gold Rush of 1849 also attributed to heavy utilization of the trail through the reserve. Records indicate that in 1852, approximately 52,000 travelers passed through the City of Rocks on their way to the California goldfields, leaving wagon ruts and inscriptions on local rock formations. By 1869, the Transcontinental Railroad had been completed. The Union Pacific (from the east) and the Central Pacific (from the west) connected rail tracks at Utah’s Promontory Summit. Ultimately, the completion of the railroad resulted in decreased wagon traffic through the City of Rocks, although emigrant traffic continued along the Salt Lake Alternate until 1882.

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark Status:	Yes
Date Determined Landmark:	07/19/1964
Landmark Theme:	Theme X, "Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898," subtheme D, "Western Trails and Travelers," facet 4, "California Trails and Settlement of California."

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status:	No
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Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Site

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Transportation-Other

Primary Current Use: Recreation/Culture-Other

Other Use/Function

Livestock

Scenic Landscape-Other

Other Type of Use or Function

Both Current And Historic

Both Current And Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name

Cassia Silent City of Rocks

City of Castles

Granite City

City of Rocks

Type of Name

Historic

Historic

Historic

Both Current And Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Significance Description:

No specific anthropological, ethnographic or ethnohistorical research project has been completed for City of Rocks, although a multi-park study was completed by Dan Myers in 1999. The title is "An Ethnographic Overview and Assessment of the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument and Other Areas in Southern Idaho." The study areas addressed include C.J. Strike Dam, Hagerman, Shoshone Falls, Craters of the Moon, City of Rocks and the Bear River Massacre Site.

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
AD 1826	Explored	Peter Skene Ogden and his brigade of beaver trappers assessed fur resources in the City of Rocks locale.
AD 1840	Inhabited	Pre-1840, Pocatello's Northern Shoshone band occupied the area near the City of Rocks.
AD 1842	Established	Joseph B. Chiles brought a small group of people from California back to Missouri to establish a better emigrant road for later migration
AD 1841 - 1869	Explored	More than a quarter of a million people crossed the plains to the "El Dorado" of the west.
AD 1843	Established	The City of Rocks became a landmark for emigrants traveling along the California and Salt Lake Alternate Trail.
AD 1848	Established	The Mormon Battalion opened a trail from Granite Pass via Emigrant Canyon to Salt Lake City.
AD 1848	Expanded	The United States acquired lands originally claimed by Mexico, including Granite Pass.
AD 1849	Established	Pioneer, James F. Wilkins named the City of Rocks.
AD 1849	Established	The California gold rush began.
AD 1849	Established	Fort Laramie was established, quickly developing into a key resupply point and trading post for emigrants. Fort Laramie also became a significant military fort. At this location, the Mormon and Oregon-California trails merged.
AD 1850	Established	The City of Rocks became part of Utah Territory.
AD 1852	Explored	Approximately 52,000 people passed through the City of Rocks on their way to the California goldfields.

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AD 1863	Established	The Pony Express was established, providing service between Salt Lake City and Boise.
AD 1869	Built	The Transcontinental Railroad was completed. The Union Pacific (from the east) and the Central Pacific (from the west) connected rail tracks at Utah's Promontory Summit. The opening of this railroad decreased wagon traffic through the City of Rocks via Granite Pass.
AD 1870 - 1879	Ranched/Grazed	Cattle and sheep grazing began in the City of Rocks locale.
AD 1869 - 1882	Established	The Kelton Stage Route passed through the City of Rocks. Accordingly, a stage coach station was located near the junction of the old California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternative, serving as a place of rest for weary travelers
AD 1872	Established	The Idaho-Utah boundary survey placed the City of Rocks in Idaho Territory.
AD 1873 - 1874	Built	The first railroad line was constructed in Idaho. The tracks were laid from Ogden and extended to Franklin. As a result of its construction, fewer visitors traveled through the City of Rocks.
AD 1875	Built	James Q. Shirley fenced a ranch in the Cove in an area associated with the City of Rocks.
AD 1877	Built	John Stines constructed the first cabin in the reserve area.
AD 1877	Established	A Mormon settler opened a log-cabin store on the north side of Almo Creek.
AD 1882	Built	A school and church were built near the log-cabin store on the north side of Almo Creek.
AD 1882 - 1884	Built	Construction of the Oregon Short Line was completed, eliminating the need for the Kelton-Boise stage and freight lines.
AD 1888	Established	George W. Lunsford filed a claim for 160 acres on Circle Creek in what is now known as the City of Rocks National Reserve.

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AD 1895 - 1920	Established	At least six identifiable ranches were developed in the City of Rocks locale.
AD 1909 - 1920	Homesteaded	Homesteading occurred on private lands associated with the reserve.
AD 1914	Farmed/Harvested	High wheat prices attracted dryland farmers into the Circle Creek Basin. Sagebrush was cleared, fences and roads were constructed and crops were planted.
AD 1920 - 1929	Farmed/Harvested	Dryland farming in the City of Rocks began to decline as a result of a drought.
AD 1957	Established	Idaho Legislative Act 101-57, sec. 1 (20) made an endowment section of the City of Rocks a state park.
AD 1964	Established	The City of Rocks was designated as a National Historic Landmark.
AD 1974	Established	The City of Rocks was designated as a National Natural Landmark.
AD 1988	Established	The City of Rocks was designated as a National Reserve.
AD 1992	Established	Legislation designated the California National Historic Trail as a component of the national trails system.
AD 1993	Established	Cassia County enacted the Historic Preservation Zone Ordinance, regulating private development adjacent to and inside the boundary of the reserve.
AD 1993	Land Transfer	The NPS acquired a 320-acre parcel and a 20-acre parcel of land (Tracy, Haines), including portions of the California Trail.
AD 1994	Land Transfer	The NPS acquired an 850-acre parcel of land (Hedges), including portions of the California Trail on the east side of the park.
AD 1995	Land Transfer	The NPS acquired a 320-acre parcel of land (Kempton), including portions of the California Trail and immediate viewshed.

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AD 1996	Established	On-site management and administration was transferred from the NPS to IDPR on May 2, 1996.
AD 2000	Land Transfer	The Castle Rock Ranch Acquisition Act of 2000 directed the Secretary of the Interior to enter into land exchange to acquire from private owners and to convey to the State of Idaho approximately 1,240 acres of land near the City of Rocks National Reserve.
AD 2004	Land Transfer	The NPS acquired a 20-acre parcel of land (Erickson-Eck), including portions of the California Trail and emigrant inscriptions.
AD 2005	Expanded	The NPS acquired Register Rock and an adjacent 290-acre parcel of land.

Physical History:

Introduction

The City of Rocks National Reserve has a rich history associated with indigenous peoples as well as Euro American westward migration along the California Trail. Manifested in a rich array of cultural resources extant in the reserve, several historic themes, including westward migration and exploration play an important role in the early history and development of the site. Later, themes related to agriculture, homesteading, ranching and grazing served to influence the development of land within the reserve. Today, the City of Rocks National Reserve is managed under a cooperative agreement by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and serves as both a recreational and historical attraction for over 80,000 visitors annually.

The following narrative provides an overview of the development and physical history of the City of Rocks National Reserve. The first period of development briefly describes the history of the land associated with the reserve and ends in 1842 before the area experienced a large frequency of Euro American explorers and fur trappers. Beginning in 1843, the second period of development includes the arrival of the first group of Euro Americans that passed through the reserve while traveling along the California Trail. This period ends in 1869 as a result of the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Significantly, this period is associated with one of the largest overland migrations in American history. Between 1870 and 1883, the City of Rocks was associated with postal and stagecoach traffic traversing across its boundaries. Following the decline of stagecoach traffic traveling through the reserve, agriculture and homesteading activities emerged between 1884 and 1920. In the early 1920s, dryland agriculture began to decline due to drought and as a result, a period of intensive ranching and grazing ensued between the 1920s and the mid 1950s. In 1957, an endowment section of City of Rocks became a state park, which served as informal transition to conservation and recreation-related land uses. Today, the City of Rocks is known for its unique geology, rich history and ideal recreational opportunities, serving as a destination for visitors from all around the world.

It should be noted that several secondary historical sources have been produced documenting the history of the City of Rocks National Reserve. These sources provide an abundance of contextual background information concerning westward migration, the development of the California Trail and subsequent expansion of agricultural and homesteading activities within the boundaries of the reserve. As a result of the high quality of this information, significant portions of the physical history will be drawn directly from existing secondary sources. These sources include: City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form (1986), Historic Resources Study (1996) and the City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination (1997), authored by Janene Caywood. Information obtained from other sources will be cited parenthetically.

Indigenous People and Early Exploration: Prehistory - 1842

Occupying an area of land at the junction of the Great Basin and the Columbia Plateau, the City

of Rocks was the home to numerous indigenous groups of American Indians over the course of thousands of years. According to sources, the first people to inhabit southern Idaho and the region associated with the City of Rocks were Late Pleistocene large game hunters. By 5,550 BC, the Desert Culture had emerged with seeds and roots serving as the primary subsistence base. Several thousand years later, between 3,050 and 2,550 BC, villages appeared in southwestern Idaho, near the Snake River, approximately 75 miles northwest of the City of Rocks. Relying on salmon as well as other food sources, the villagers developed ceramic pottery. Supported by a predictable food source, the villagers lived in the Snake River locale for several thousand years (Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) 1994, 101).

Prior to the 1840s, Pocatello, a prominent leader of the Northern Shoshoni, and his band traveled through the large expanse of territory that is now associated with the City of Rocks uninhibited. Known as the “wild wheat-eaters,” Pocatello’s tribe harvested fish, game and pine nut crops in the region. At this time, the Shoshoni also grazed large horse herds in the upper Raft River Valley as well as within the reserve (Historic Resources Study (HRS) 1996, 19).

Pocatello and his followers did not have interaction with Euro Americans until 1826, when Peter Skene Ogden led a fur trapping expedition through the area. Ascending the Raft River, Ogden’s group crossed Granite Pass to reach Goose Creek where they concluded that the region offered poor fur resources. Unfortunately, many of these trappers either did not travel into the City of Rocks or did not describe their trips into the reserve. Regardless, it is likely that the City of Rocks area was explored in 1834 by Joseph R. Walker, who was in search of an overland route for emigrant travel. After 1840, many of the men who trapped fur in the Granite Pass area became guides for overland emigrant parties (CMP 1994, 101).

Westward Migration on the California Trail: 1843 - 1869

The following paragraphs related to the historical background of westward migration are adapted from the 1996 Historic Resources Study, pages 24-29:

In 1840, Thomas Farnham and his small party traveled from Peoria, Illinois to the Oregon Territory, initiating a mass migration that would peak at over 100,000 in 1852 but that would not end until completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Historian John D. Unruh, Jr. wrote that the overland migration has been “one of the most fascinating topics for writers, folklorists, and historians of the American West. The overlanders’... legendary covered wagons have come to symbolize America’s westward movement.” The emigrants themselves realized the enormous personal, social, cultural, and political consequences of their journey and left an astonishing array of diaries and letters describing their routes and their life along those routes. Chimney Rock, Independence Rock and the City of Rocks figure prominently in these accounts – they disrupted the monotony of the journey as surely they broke the level surface of the plains. In varied degrees of eloquence and imagination, emigrants duly described them. The City of Rocks also occasioned comment as a place of heightened Indian menace; a place of final respite, prior to the dreaded crossing of the barren Humboldt plain; and as an important junction trail and landmark.

Historical Background

All migrations are a response to both “push” and “pull” factors. Depression hit the vast Mississippi Valley in 1837. Land and opportunity that only twenty years earlier had represented the American frontier were scarce. Wheat sold for ten cents a bushel and corn sold for practically nothing. The push west then, for this “free, enlightened [but] redundant people,” was considerable. The pull was also compelling: the opportunity to secure the Oregon Country as American territory and unlimited, fertile soil, not only in Oregon but also in Mexico’s northern province of California.

The pull had actually begun decades earlier, in print if not in fact. In 1813, the St. Louis Missouri Gazette reported “no obstruction ... that nay person would dare to care a mountain” between St. Louis and the Columbia River [and] in all probability [no Indians] to interrupt ... progress. In 1830, trapper William L. Sublette successfully breached the Continental Divide at South Pass (Wyoming) with wagons. He subsequently reported to the Secretary of War that “the ease and safety with which it was done proved the facility of communicating over land with the Pacific Ocean.” One year later, Boston’s American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory published a General Circular to all Persons of Good Character Who Wish to Emigrate to the OREGON TERRITORY. The circular promised an account of “the character and advantages of the country; the right and the means of operations by which it is to be settled and ALL NECESSARY DIRECTIONS FOR BECOMING AN EMIGRANT.”

Others urged caution, arguing that while the mountains might be passable (with great difficulty); the “Great American Desert” was not. W.J. Snelling predicted mass starvation in the arid plains, loss of stock to Indian theft, and Indian attack in “retaliation for the pillaging of white hunters.” He concluded that the trip could not be made in one season, forcing emigrants to winter in the Rocky Mountains, where they could first eat their horses and then their shoes, before “starving with the wolves.” Potential emigrants debated the wisdom of the journey in this carnival of “ignorance, unreality and confusion.”

In compelling proof of the journey’s possibility, Presbyterian missionaries Samuel Parker, Marcus Whitman, and Henry Spalding, in the company of women and children, traveled overland to Oregon Territory in 1834. Methodist Missionary Jason Lee followed in 1839, with 51 settlers. These men and women went west as evangelists, not to prosper but to save the souls of the native inhabitants. Yet, western historian Ray Allen Billington writes that “their contribution to history was significant, not as apostles of Christianity, but as promoters of migration. More than any other group they kept alive the spark of interest in Oregon and hurried the westward surge of population into the Willamette Valley.” Reports sent from the Whitman mission to eastern religious journals were replete with details of the prospering farms, of abundant resources, and of virgin land. Perhaps as significantly, the Whitman’s presence promised shelter and companionship at the end of a long and unfamiliar trail.

California boosters also described a gentle and healthy climate, potential agricultural wealth, an enormous variety of resources, and abundant game. In 1840, Richard H. Dana published *Two Years Before the Mast*, “probably the most influential single bit of California propaganda.”

Dana boasted “In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be!” And an enterprising people responded.

The California Trail

The first party to travel overland to California came from Platte County, western Missouri. In 1841, the 69 men, women, and children were encouraged by returned trapper Antoine Robidoux who described a “perfect paradise, a perennial spring.” They were led by John Bidwell and John Bartleson and further assisted by trapper Thomas Fitzpatrick and Jesuit priest Father De Smet. The Bidwell-Bartleson party followed the Oregon Trail as far as Soda Springs (near present day Pocatello, Idaho). Here, half the party opted for Oregon. The remainder abandoned their wagons and proceeded southwest across the tortuous, alkali “Bonneville Flats” north of the Great Salt Lake, along the trail blazed by Jedediah Smith in 1827 and Joseph Walker in 1833.

Other parties followed by alternative routes: via Santa Fe, via Oregon, and, in 1843 via City of Rocks/Granite Pass, by way of the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall. This later party traveled under the leadership of Walker and Joseph B. Chiles, a member of the Bidwell-Bartleson party of 1841. At the confluence of the Raft and Snake rivers, Chiles and “a few companions” proceeded west along the Snake, to the Malheur River, and thence south to California. Walker and the remainder of the party proceeded up the Raft River, to the City of Rocks, west to the Goose Creek range, to a wagon pass at Granite Pass – a route destined to become the main overland road to California.

This route met the basic requirements of an overland trail: it possessed a minimum of geographic obstacles (although wagons had to be lowered by rope down Granite Pass and other defiles); water was available at reasonably regular intervals, as was sufficient browse for emigrant stock; and, with the exception of the unfortunate and much-lamented loop to the north between South Pass and the Raft River confluence, the trail formed a direct line between the Mississippi Valley and the promised land.

Subsequent alternatives – the Salt Lake Alternate and Hudspeth’s Cutoff – varied the route between South Pass and the Upper Humboldt, but all funneled to City of Rocks and Granite Pass. It should be noted that in 1846, emigrants heading for Oregon’s Willamette Valley also used this route as part of the Applegate Trail. These alternates promised varied advantages: some were billed as shorter, offering emigrants the advantage of time; some offered access to provisions. The advantages realized did not always comport with those promised: shorter did not always mean faster and provisions were not always available.

The City of Rocks: Natural History and Geology

The natural environment and geology associated with the City of Rocks locale played an important role in the utilization and subsequent development of the site. Inevitably, the unique geologic features in addition to available water and grazing resources served to attract emigrants traveling along the California Trail. Later, the natural and geologic features attracted

dryland agriculturalists and those interested in grazing opportunities within the reserve.

The following paragraphs regarding the natural history and geology of the City of Rocks are adapted from the 1996 Historic Resources Study, pages 7-11:

The City of Rocks National Reserve lies within the southern end of the Albion Mountains, and is characterized by extreme topographic relief. Steep, heavily dissected, north/south-oriented ridges and free-standing knobs typify the area. Drainages are steep, rocky, and, for the most part, ephemeral. From north to south, the reserve contains two, relatively large, gently sloping, basins—each drained by an eastward flowing tributary of the Raft River. Beginning at the north end of the reserve, the Circle Creek basin draws water from three tributaries, North, Center and South creeks. This basin contains a large concentration of granitic outcrops and monoliths that inspired the name of City of Rocks. It also contains one of the most reliable water sources within the reserve, was a favored campsite for emigrants on the California Trail, and was the location of the earliest homestead withdrawal in the area. The second, unnamed basin is located slightly southwest of Circle Creek—separated from the latter by a wide, low, ridge. The moderate slope of the land, coupled with comparatively deep loamy soil, proved attractive to the dryland farmers and early settlers. At one time this basin contained four homesites (on Enlarged Homestead claims), and various irrigation improvements (associated with a Desert Land entry.)

The Twin Sisters, a free-standing granite formation (known as a bornhardt) that figures prominently in emigrant diaries, stands at the southern edge of this second basin. The tallest twin (6838') rises 750 feet above the basin floor. This formation is located midway along a narrow eroded ridge that extends southeast from the mountain that forms the west boundary of the basin. A series of smaller monoliths outcrop along the eastern toeslope of this mountain, forming an arc that rims the west edge of the basin floor. Pinnacle Pass, lying one-half mile southeast of the Twin Sisters in the same ridge system, funneled California Trail travelers to the next drainage south—out of the City of Rocks and towards the junction of the California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternate.

The City of Rocks: Emigrant Visitation

The following paragraphs concerning emigrant visitation are adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 Draft City of Rocks National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pages 24-25 and from the 1996 Historic Resources Study, pages 36-37:

Between 1841 and 1860, the various overland roads leading west funneled as many as 200,000 men, women, and children through the City of Rocks. Prior to 1849, emigrants were primarily families of farmers, hopeful of settling – of staying – in California and Oregon. After the 1849 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the wagon trains were joined by single men, unencumbered with heavy loads and hopeful of leaving California once they had struck it rich in the placer deposits of the Sacramento Valley; by 1850, both those who were successful and those who failed added a stream of east-bound traffic to the migration. By 1852, the gold fever had waned and "families seeking new homes" once again replaced the fortune hunters. For those

traveling between 1851 and 1862, when the threat of death from hostile American Indians kept pace with the threat from cholera or accident, the journey west of South Pass was significantly more dangerous than for those who had preceded and those who would follow.

Yet there were the constants of daily life—irrespective of the year, men and beasts needed food, water, and protection. Seven thousand five hundred mules, 31,000 oxen, 23,999 horses, and 5,000 cows accompanied the 9,000 California-bound wagons counted in Fort Laramie in 1852—the peak year of emigrant traffic. Cut the numbers in half, for more “typical” years, and they remain impressive. These animals needed water when they “nooned” and again at the end of the day. The drain on the semi-arid West’s water and browse resources was significant, necessitating that camp sites be varied and numerous and that the trail be spread over a many-mile radius, except in those areas where passage was limited to a narrow area.

Many emigrants used the City of Rocks as a camping area, exploiting the resources available in the locale. In addition, the Raft River Valley (east of City of Rocks), Big Cove (2 miles east of the City of Rocks, near Almo), and Junction Valley (2 miles southwest of the City of Rocks) were also used as camping sites, particularly in the years of heaviest traffic and least rain. These camps provided not only an afternoon’s or a night’s rest, but also served as final havens of water and grass as migrants approached the long trek along the Humboldt River and the “Forty Mile Desert” past the Humboldt Sink. This was “the dreaded part of California travel, made more tragic by the weakened condition of so many emigrants and the death of so much of their livestock.” To avoid similar fates, trains would sacrifice precious days in the Raft River and Goose Creek regions to allow their stock to rest and feed.

While resting in the City of Rocks, emigrants often took the opportunity to explore the unique rock formations in the locale. Not surprisingly, the weary travelers were awe-struck by the beautiful rock formations and scenery in the area. Many emigrants described their experiences in journals in poetic detail. Others printed their names on the rocks themselves. Emigrant names and dates can be found on many rock formations, including Register Rock, Elephant’s Head and Camp Rock. Today, traces of names and dates are visible, serving as a reminder of the significance of the time and place.

The following examples illustrate the emigrants’ response to the City of Rocks as recorded in their personal journals:

On July 19, 1849, Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly reported that: “The road here lies between high and immense rocky mountains, with not a particle of herbage or vegetation upon them, but being white and smooth upon their surface. Just opposite to where we encamped was one with struck us as particularly curious. It was a perfect face upon the highest cliff around . . . The road continued between these and around these rocky piles, church domes, spires, pyramids, & cs., and in fact, with a little fancying you can see {anything} from the capitol at Washington to a lowly thatched cottage” (quoted in the City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form 1986).

On August 29, 1849, J. Goldsborough Bruff provided a colorful description of the reserve

indicating the presence of: "An entire range on our left, of volcanic hills, for about 15 miles; and on our right, similar formations for about 10 ms. When we entered a very extraordinary valley, called the 'City of Castles.' A couple of miles long, and probably a mile broad, A light grey decrepitating granite, (probably altered by fire) in blocks of every size, from that of a barrel to the dimensions of a large dwelling house; groups, Masses on Masses, and Cliffs; and worn, by the action of ages of elementary affluences, into strange and romantic forms. The travellers had marked several large blocks, as their fancy dictated the resemblance to houses, castles &c. On one was marked (with tar) "NAPOLEON'S CASTLE," another "CITY HOTEL" &c. We nooned among these curious monuments of nature. I dined hastily, on bread and water, and while others rested, I explored and sketched some of these queer rocks. A group, on left of the trail, resembled gigantic fungi, petrified, other clusters were torn in cells and caverns: and one, which contrasted with the size and height of the adjacent rocks, seemed no larger than a big chest, was, to my astonishment, when close to it, quite large, hollow, with an arch'd entrance, and capable of containing a dozen persons. This, from its peculiar shape, I named the "Sarcophagus Rock" (quoted in the City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form 1986).

Other travelers equated their City of Rocks experience as a religious one. On August 4, 1849, August Burbank noted, they: "Passed on through what I called pyramid pass. The Grey Granite Rocks stand in pyramid, mountain and dome forms, here and there towering aloft. The road winds along between them. Emigrants names are written with tar-keel and on these curious structures. Here was truly manifested in a temporial point, the figures used in the Scriptures like unto the Shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The Shadow was cool-inviting and brought to mind the Spiritus illustration—of the figure—the Scenery was grand and the concave rocks at the narrow pass was quite a curiosity" (quoted in the City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form 1986).

In 1850, Franklin Langworth, a journalist traveling from Salt Lake City, published an early description (Scenery on the Plains, Ogdensburg, New York: J.C. Sprague, 1855) of the route, indicating: "A short distance from the junction are the noted Steeple Rocks between two of which runs the Fort Hall road, the pass being barely sufficient to crown a wagon through. In sight of, and near our road, are two tall and sharp pointed columns tow or three hundred feet in apparent height, their forms being regular and beautifully elongated cones. Here are monuments erected by the hand of Nature, rivaling in grandeur Trajan's Pillar, or Cleopatra's Needle. Further back on the Fort Hall road, I am told is a succession of these steeples, filling a narrow valley for two or three miles. . ." (quoted in the City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form 1986).

Clearly, the City of Rocks provided emigrants with a unique and memorable experience. Additionally, the site provided travelers with a strategic resting place that allowed emigrants the opportunity to rest and prepare for difficult trail conditions that lie just ahead.

The Decline of Emigrant Traffic Through City of Rocks: 1870 - 1883

The following paragraphs regarding postal and stage coach traffic are adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pages

32-34:

By 1860, emigrants faced a remarkably different journey than that undertaken by their predecessors: they traveled along surveyed and graded roads, crossed the most deadly rivers by bridge or ford, and watered their stock at constructed reservoirs. Blacksmith shops and trading posts had been established and mail could be sent and received en route. Furthermore, routes such as Lander's road began to change emigrant routes. Construction of the Simpson Road from Salt Lake City due west to the Carson Valley (roughly paralleling the abandoned Hasting's Cutoff), also impacted emigrant travel through the City of Rocks.

Not surprisingly, as routes associated with the California Trail and westward migration began to shift, emigrant travel through the City of Rocks began to decline. After 1852 emigrant traffic through the City of Rocks began to slow down significantly. Upon completion of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad in 1869, emigrant traffic nearly came to a halt, although wagons continued along the Salt Lake Alternate, south of City of Rocks until 1882.

After emigrant traffic began to decline, the City of Rocks remained an important transportation center, serving as a relay point and rest stop on the mail and stage route connecting the railhead at Kelton, Utah, with the boom mining communities of the Boise Basin. This activity would extend to 1883 when the Kelton to Boise stage route was largely abandoned as a result of completion of the Oregon Short Line Railroad.

Postal and Stage Coach Traffic

Since the founding of Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake Alternate to the Overland Trail had served as a freight route connecting the interior basin with the Pacific coast. Beginning in September of 1850, George Chorpenning and Absalom Woodward's government-sponsored mail wagons ran from Fort Bridger to Sacramento, by way of the Salt Lake Alternate and Granite Pass. The route was abandoned in September of 1853, in response to harsh winters and Indian attacks, yet resumed briefly in 1858, when the Mormon War disrupted the San Bernardino route. Concord coaches or four-horse mud wagons passed through the region once a week, from July to December, 1858, when the route was again abandoned in favor of a central Nevada route west of Provo, Utah.

Beginning ca. 1860, a local version of the famous Pony Express ran through the City of Rocks, along a route that extended from Boise to Brigham City, Utah, by way of Rock Creek, Oakley, Goose Creek, City of Rocks stage station, and the Raft River Headwaters, and Kelton Pass. By 1862, the discovery of gold in the Boise Basin created a new market for Salt Lake goods, which in turn, resulted in a modification in the abandoned Chorpenning and Woodward route. Sources indicate that this route passed Emigrant Canyon, and then turned northward, entering the Snake River Valley near Oakley. Several years later, ca. 1864, Ben Holladay of the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company initiated a run from the railroad at Kelton, Utah, to Boise Basin mining communities. The 240-mile trip from Kelton to the Boise Basin took approximately 40 hours, with a total of 19 stage stations strategically located 10 to 15 miles apart at sites possessing sufficient water and grass for the horses. Additionally, "Home

City of Rocks
City of Rocks National Reserve

Stations” were situated approximately 50 to 60 miles apart and provided lodging for drivers and a meal for passengers.

The City of Rocks Home Station was located at the head of Emigrant Canyon, adjacent to the same spring that had induced the emigrants to establish camp. Chorpenning and Woodward may have constructed the station as early as 1858 when they “stocked [their] route past City of Rocks with stations every twenty miles or so.” Reportedly, in the 1870s, Mr. and Mrs. William Trotter served five meals a day at the City of Rocks station. The Kelton to Boise stage route was largely abandoned by 1883, when the Oregon Short Line Railroad reached the Snake River corridor, north of the City of Rocks. Nonetheless, it should be noted that wagon/freight traffic continued to utilize the Boise-Kelton route on a limited basis several years after the introduction of the rail line; however, Granite Pass fell into total disuse. Nearly forty years after the abandonment, in approximately 1921, homesteader Joseph Moon dismantled the outbuildings at the station, using the logs in construction of his homestead buildings. In 1994, remnants of the stage station were assessed as part of a preliminary cultural landscape investigation. Recorded features, all of which are located on privately owned property, included the remnants of 5 structures, a well, cellar, foundation, pond/dam system, an outbuilding, farm machinery, fencing and a number of road traces extending east to west (Tolon 1994).



History #1: Photograph taken from the top of Camp Rock overlooking the City of Rocks National Reserve, ca. early 1900s. Note the presence of wagon ruts in the foreground, which are associated with the California Trail (Utah State Historical Society).



History #2: Unique rock formations in the City of Rocks National Reserve, ca. 1910s (Utah State Historical Society).



History #3: Historic photograph of the Twin Sister rock formation in the City of Rocks National Reserve, n.d. (ISHS72-201.70A, Morris 2006).

Settlement and Agricultural Development: 1884 - 1919

Following the decline of stagecoach traffic traversing the reserve, land use began to change between 1884 and 1920. More specifically, during this period, dryland farming and homestead

claims were established by local settlers in the City of Rocks area. To a lesser degree, cattle grazing activities were also undertaken by settlers. These endeavors would flourish until the early 1920s when drought conditions forced many agriculturalists to abandon their homesteads and associated agricultural crops.

Early Settlement and Homesteading

The following paragraphs concerning early settlement and homesteading are adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pages 35-44:

Forty years after the wagon trains first rolled west, the City of Rocks had become a place of settlement as well as a place of transit. It was home to Mormon families that expanded the cordon of Mormon influence beyond the central cultural and political core of the Salt Lake Basin/Wasatch Range, to a Mormon "domain" that ultimately encompassed all of Utah and much of northern Arizona and southern Idaho.

The first General Land Office surveys show only limited development within the immediate boundaries of what is now the City of Rocks National Reserve. In his 1878 survey of the east half of Township 15S 24E, Allen Thompson noted only an unnamed road along the general route of the California Trail. He described the southern tip as "gently rolling" with "second-rate [soil], good grass and scattered sage" while reserving the accolade "agricultural land" for the north half of the township near Circle Creek—land soon claimed by the City's first homestead resident, George Lunsford. Subsequent project-area surveys dated 1884, 1886, and 1892 note the "old California Road," roads over Lyman Pass "to Oakley," "from [the Emery] Canyon road to Junction Valley," and "to timber," as well as scattered corrals and scattered buildings, their placement without exception dictated by the presence of water. Formal claim to the best of the public domain—along the water courses in the flat lands east of the City of Rocks—quickly followed the survey crews. By the mid-1880s, presumed-cultivable and irrigable land had been claimed under the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Desert Land Act of 1877.

The Homestead Act of 1862 promised 160 acres of surveyed agricultural lands to those heads of families, 21-years of age and older, who were, or who intended to become, American citizens. Arid western lands, void of timber and uncultivable without irrigation, could also be claimed under the Desert Land Act of 1877, amended in 1891. The 1877 act allowed claims of 640 reasonably-compact arid acres, at a cost of \$.25 per acre at the time of filing and \$1 per acre three years later, at the time of final proof when the land had been reclaimed. Of the numerous Desert Land Act claims filed on land encompassed within what is now the City of Rocks National Reserve, all but a few were abandoned or relinquished.

Only limited pockets of land within what is now the reserve were claimed in the first wave of settlement. In 1882, Iowa farmer George W. Lunsford claimed irrigable land along Circle Creek and the right to the water therein; in 1901 he sold his developed tract to William Tracy who developed the Circle Creek Ranch on this and adjoining land. In 1901, William's wife

Mary Ann claimed 160 “Desert” acres downstream from Lunsford’s original claim, testifying that this land would not, “without artificial irrigation, produce an agricultural crop of any kind...” Construction of storage reservoirs along intermittent North and South Circle Creeks ultimately allowed successful cultivation of oats, barley, and alfalfa; the remaining acreage was relegated to spring and summer range for the Tracy’s cattle. Margaret Hansen also filed a Desert Land Act claim in 1909, irrigating her fields of alfalfa, wheat and rye with water conveyed by reservoir and ditch from South Circle Creek. In a delayed conclusion to the first phase of area settlement, Eugene Durfee patented 160 acres at the eastern gateway to the City of Rocks in 1919. This land was reportedly planted in water-thirsty corn, beets, potatoes, and alfalfa suggesting that Durfee had constructed an irrigation system.

By 1909, the agricultural zone watered by Circle, Almo, Grape, Edwards, Cassia, Marsh, Basin and Circle creeks consisted of almost 12,000 acres of irrigated farmlands, surrounding the communities of Almo, Ward, Elba, Basin and Albion. With the exception of the Circle Creek bottomlands, City of Rocks lay beyond the fertile pale of the area creeks and protected valleys. Throughout the first wave of settlement, it remained public domain, utilized as upper-elevation spring and summer range by those farming the valley bottoms. The earliest settlers disdained this land as uncultivable. This view of the City changed dramatically with Idaho’s inclusion in the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act and the arrival of the dryland farmers. When the 160 acres allowable under the Homestead Act of 1862 proved insufficient for successful cultivation or stock raising in the arid West, the figure was adjusted to allow for claims of 320 cultivable acres—the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909. As such, the new act simply provided the minimum acreage necessary for alternate cropping and fallowing, which allowed overgrazed range land to become productive.

Of the 27 patented tracts within the City of Rocks National Reserve, 19 were dryland farms claimed between 1910 and 1919—an era initiated by Idaho’s inclusion in the Enlarged Homestead Act and terminated by the drought of the 1920s. Virtually without exception, these Enlarged Homestead claims were marginal enterprises centered on marginal land foresworn by the first wave of settlers. Patent records for the City of Rocks indicate that planted acreage was small, rarely exceeding 100 acres and more often totaling less than 30. Yet much of the land not planted was fenced, thereby dramatically altering neighboring ranchers’ access to what had been spring range. By the early 1920s a drought ensued and dryland farmers residing in the City of Rocks abandoned their claims. Later this land was utilized as summer and fall range land.

Buildings and Structures

The following paragraphs related to the built environment are adapted from Janene Caywood’s 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pages 55-59:

Patent files for claims within the boundaries of the City of Rocks National Reserve are primarily for small-scale dryland claims and reveal a remarkable similarity in agricultural infrastructure. Residents consistently constructed hen houses/chicken coops, pig pens, “carrels” (corrals), miscellaneous sheds, cellars, developed springs, miles of fencing, and an

occasional barn. The more prosperous irrigated and stock claims of George Davis, Mary Ann and William Tracy, George Lunsford (sold to William Tracy), Margaret and John Hansen, and Eugene Durfee also boasted stables, granaries, hay yards, and stockyards. Like the homes, ranch infrastructure evolved as money, time, and manpower were made available: John Lind constructed his barn in 1894, ten years after initial settlement. A rock floor and piped water “came a little later.”

Irrigation and Reservoir Networks

The Desert Land Act testimonies of Mary Ann Tracy (who owned Circle Creek Ranch with her husband William), of Margaret Hansen (whose land adjoined the holdings of her husband John Hansen) and of Joseph Moon provide limited descriptions of irrigation networks constructed within the boundaries of the City of Rocks National Reserve. The Circle Creek Ranch main ditches, drawing water from reservoirs on Dry Canyon, North Circle, and South Circle creeks, averaged 1 foot deep and 1.5 deep wide. (The dimensions for two “smaller” lateral ditches are not provided.)

In 1909, Margaret Hansen proposed to construct a reservoir on the South Fork of Circle Creek, “300 feet long, 10 feet high and backing water up about 150 feet.” Main ditches from this water source were to be 1.5 feet deep and 2.5 feet wide, with a capacity of “about 200 inches.” No evidence of either the reservoir or the ditches was found in the field, suggesting that the system was never constructed. Furthermore, in 1925, Joseph Moon patented land encircling the Emigrant Canyon spring and containing the abandoned City of Rocks stagecoach station; his requisite irrigation network consisted of a stone dam below the spring, and a “trench” running from the reservoir out of a steep gully to a main ditch and two laterals. Additionally, it should be noted that most often, limited irrigation water within the City of Rocks was drawn from developed springs that also provided domestic water.

Circulation

The transportation network also reflected the evolving economic orientation of the area. Prior to passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act, roads within the City of Rocks generally followed the historic alignments of the overland trails and the various routes of the Kelton Road. Insubstantial secondary routes led “to timber” or served as cattle and sheep trails. Additionally, sources indicate that the condition of the California Trail between Almo and Junction Valley was so poor in the 1880s that custom threshing crews from Almo were unable to travel to John Lind’s Junction Valley homestead. Improvements to this first road network were made by community road associations. In Almo, ca. 1880, “each man in the community was assessed three dollars, “to be paid in cash or labor.”

With the ca. 1910 settlement of Junction Valley and of the City of Rocks, the transportation routes were improved, fenced, and reconstructed to follow section/claim lines. By 1920, the regional road network had achieved roughly its current configuration: “Oakley is joined to Burley ... by a graded and graveled highway. From Oakley a secondary route in fair condition leads southeastward across the Cassia City of Rocks. Another road extends directly east and

City of Rocks
City of Rocks National Reserve

across the Albion Range and descends to Elba...From Albion a secondary road passes southward through Elba and Almo to the Cassia City of Rocks...The basins and foothills of the ranges are nearly everywhere accessible, mostly on roads which are not maintained and seldom used except by sheep wagons.” Not surprisingly, much of this road system was unusable during the winter months. Local residents, through the road associations, maintained as well as constructed these gravel roads.



History #4: Historic photograph of the Mikesell shed, located within the City of Rocks National Reserve, n.d. (Utah State Historical Society).



History #5: Photo of Circle Creek in the City of Rocks National Reserve, 1940. Note barn in left background (ISHS72-201.70N, Morris 2006).

Cattle Grazing in the City of Rocks: 1920 - 1956

As a result of the onset of drought conditions in the early 1920s, many of the dryland farms and associated agricultural endeavors in the City of Rocks failed. As agriculturalists abandoned their homesteads, the land was reclaimed by cattle foraging activities. Serving as an important grazing locale, the City of Rocks would maintain a vibrant ranching community for the next several decades until land use shifted again.

The following paragraphs regarding grazing and stockraising are adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pages 45-50:

The City of Rocks' most economically successful land use has been as range land. Livestock use of what is now City of Rocks National Reserve began with the Northern Shoshoni who grazed their horses. Emigrants led thousands of sheep, cattle, horses, and mules to graze in City of Rocks as they passed through the area on the California Trail. Livestock grazing continued with cattle and sheep drives between 1850 and 1886 and initial and subsequent homesteads between 1869 and 1910. By 1880, residents of the Marsh Basin (Albion), Elba, and Almo enumeration districts described themselves most often as ranchers. The economic success and the subsistence of these communities was in large part depended upon cattle and sheep run on public land; farming endeavors were designed primarily to provide a family's subsistence and to produce forage for their livestock during the winter months.

The droughts and winters of the 1880s and 1890s and the arrival of homesteaders within the watered valleys had ended the open-range cattle industry; neither, however, had dramatically

affected stockmen's summer use of the non-cultivable, unsettled, high-elevation spring and summer range, of which the City of Rocks was a part: "The range was considered free, with the only means of control by ownership or occupancy of the watering places." Until the articulation and implementation of a national range conservation program, Snake River Basin ranchers continued to overstock and overgraze this range, with little respect for growing seasons or carrying capacity.

Unregulated range use came with an ecological as well as human price; both the violence and the resource depletion inspired (with the rest of the West) a series of public land laws designed to conserve and perpetuate the range while allowing for economic viability: the 1897 creation of National Forest Reserves; the 1905 establishment of the United States Forest Service; the 1916 passage of the Stockraising Homestead Act; and the 1934 passage of the Taylor Grazing Act, which reversed the 1916 act and effectively ended the "free land" homestead era.

The Stockraising Homestead Act of 1916 was championed in part to correct overuse and grass depletion. The Act's sponsor, Harvey B. Fergusson, condemned the "plowing up and destruction of the valuable native grasses" and advocated 640-acre units as an aid to "landless and homeless citizens" and as a means of "restor[ing] and promot[ing] the live-stock and meat producing capacity of semi-arid States." Only land "chiefly valuable for grazing and raising forage crops," could be claimed under the Stockraising Homestead Act. Yet by 1916 this classification applied to very little of the public domain: most had been claimed by land agents and dryland farmers.

By the late 1920s the principal use of upland areas was established as graze for livestock. In areas where water sources could be improved to approach reliability, including Circle Creek basin and Emigrant Canyon, a system of dams and ditches were constructed to flood the adjacent areas used for hay production (either native or improved with cultivated species) to support livestock operations (Caywood 1997, 7).

Significantly, during this period many dry farms were abandoned. Reportedly the land associated with the farms was slow in reverting back to natural vegetation. By the mid 1940s, a large portion of land associated with the reserve was cleared of brush as a result of the introduction of crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron desertorum*). At this time, the area was seeded to crested wheatgrass, which allowed more cattle to graze in the locale. Significantly, the crested wheatgrass also allowed native ranges an opportunity for recovery, rendering an improvement in the ecological condition of the site (Grazing Management Plan 1996, 3; Morris 2006, 67).



History #6: Photograph of a corral, located within the boundaries of the City of Rocks National Reserve, n.d. (Cassia County Historical Society).

Resource Extraction: Mining in the City of Rocks, 1940s

The following information related to mining is adapted from the 1996 Historic Resource Study, pages 103-104:

During World War II, scattered outcroppings of mica and silica attracted sporadic interest within the City of Rocks locale. Mining interest peaked during wartime when the federal government subsidized mica production in an effort to meet its wartime supply needs. Despite the wartime prospecting that occurred within the City of Rocks, there is no evidence that “strategic mica”—hard, clear, flat, and free of mineral inclusions and cracks—was found in sufficient quantity to attract outside investment or to warrant substantial excavation.

Ultimately, only two mines were developed within the boundaries of the reserve, neither of which was formally withdrawn for mineral development. According to Caywood, these two mines represent “moonlighting” activities of people whose primary livelihood was derived from agricultural pursuits. The first mine was a feldspar/stone quarry located on Mica Knoll while the second mine, called the “Vern White Mica Mine” was located southwest of Nematode Rock (Morris 2006, 56). Today, the Vern White Mica Mine site contains large pits associated with resource extraction, a concrete foundation, a wooden mill structure, remnant metal parts

and a small tailing pond below the mill.

Historical, Natural, and Recreational Opportunities Develop While Grazing Continues: 1957 - Present

While people had been recreationally visiting the City of Rocks for many years, stock raising and grazing continued to be primary activities within the area. During the 1950s, however, land use slowly began to change. While grazing continued to play an important role in the development of City of Rocks, other land uses began to emerge. On February 27, 1957, Idaho Legislative Act 101-57, sec. 1 (20) made an endowment section of the City of Rocks a state park. Reflecting increasing interest in the preservation of cultural resources, in 1964, the City of Rocks was designated as a National Historic Landmark, acknowledging the rich history of the location and its association with the California Trail and emigrant inscriptions. Ten years later, in 1974, City of Rocks was designated as a National Natural Landmark due to the unique geology associated with the rock features, located within the park. On November 18, 1988, the City of Rocks was designated as a National Reserve. To provide further protection of cultural resources, in 1993 Cassia County enacted the Historic Preservation Zone Ordinance, regulating private development adjacent to and within the boundaries of the reserve (Keck 2004).

Initially co-managed by the National Park Service and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), on-site management and administration was transferred to IDPR on May 2, 1996 through a cooperative agreement. Both agencies remain active in the preservation and protection of City of Rocks. Also, in 1996, a grazing management plan was adopted, continuing the legacy of grazing in the reserve. The management plan provided guidelines for cattle grazing within the reserve, which included partitioning the reserve into allotments composed of pastures, the prescription of the number of AUMs (animal unit months) allowed to graze in each allotment, the dates and rotation schedules of seasonal use, and the permittee and permitted use for each allotment. Today, grazing allotments have been established for Graham Creek, Emery Canyon, Trail Canyon, Tracy Lane, Heath Canyon, Circle Creek, and Kempton (Grazing Management Plan 1996, 1).

Beyond grazing, continued change occurred in 2000 as a result of efforts leading to enhanced protection of natural and cultural resources outside of the reserve boundaries. Ultimately, these efforts culminated in the adoption of the Castle Rock Ranch Acquisition Act, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an exchange to acquire land from private landowner and to convey to the State of Idaho approximately 1,240 acres of land near the City of Rocks National Reserve. In 2005, City of Rocks National Reserve underwent another change in ownership when the NPS acquired Register Rock and an adjacent 290-acre parcel of land (Bundock 2005).

Since the transfer of management and the implementation of the cooperative agreement, the NPS and IDPR have worked collaboratively in an effort to protect City of Rocks National Reserve. Today, the reserve continues to provide historical and recreational opportunities to visitors from around the world, adhering to its prescribed purpose: "City of Rocks National Reserve was created to preserve and protect through cooperative efforts the scenic qualities and attributes of the California Trail landscape, historic rural setting, and granite features, while

interpreting its values and managing recreation" (Purpose Statement found in the CIRO Foundation Statement, 2007).

Characterized by historic archaeological remains associated with emigrant migration along the California Trail, the City of Rocks cultural landscape possesses significance due to its association with the broad patterns of our history. Providing a beautiful and often mysterious moment of respite from the hardships along the trail, the City of Rocks also served as a resting area before a long and arduous stretch of desert along the California Trail as well as a visual landmark, reminding emigrants that a trail junction was close at hand. Supplemented by the setting, feeling and association as well as awe-inspiring view sheds, the City of Rocks remains an important site associated with the history of westward migration along the California Trail.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964, the City of Rocks is nationally significant for its association with overland migration and the California Trail. The period of significance for the proposed City of Rocks cultural landscape begins in 1843 when the area became a landmark for emigrants traveling along the California and Salt Lake Alternate Trail and extends to 1882 when emigrant traffic through the area decreased. Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns in history, the City of Rocks landscape is remarkably similar to how it appeared for the hundreds of thousands of emigrants traveling along the route nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. Today, the character of the California Trail era landscape continues to be conveyed through the following six landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, aspects of land use, spatial organization, circulation, view and vistas, and archeological sites.

Features related to homesteading, ranching and grazing post-date the period of significance and do not contribute to the California Trail era landscape; however, these features may be compatible with the reserve's legislative intent to "protect the historic rural setting." In addition, they may be found to have local significance based upon future comprehensive planning efforts that assess the broader regional context, beyond the reserve boundaries, as recommended by the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer. Because the reserve may choose (through their General Management Plan process) to manage some of these features as cultural resources, they are described in the landscape characteristics section to help guide future management decisions. In addition, 4,247 acres of the 14,407 acre reserve is held in private ownership. Historic features located on private lands have not been assessed for eligibility in this document.

Landscape Characteristics

Serving as character-defining features, the landscape continues to be distinguished by granite monoliths, wide expansive basins, natural hydrologic processes, and an open vegetative character. Created over millions of years, its geologic landforms were developed as a result of deposition, folding, faulting, and erosion. Due to the area's dramatic natural scenery, City of Rocks served as a destination where emigrants could rest and enjoy the scenery, often inscribing their names into the granite faces as testament of their arduous travels.

Many of the natural features that were a significant part of the emigrant experience in City of Rocks remain nearly identical to how they were during the California Trail era. These features include the conical knolls that mark the east entrance to the City of Rocks, Circle Creek basin and the granite spires and monoliths that form its rim, the Twin Sisters basin, Pinnacle Pass, Twin Sisters, Emigrant Canyon for those travelling along the Salt Lake Alternate, and Junction Valley which led out of the City and toward Granite Pass. These natural features still remain strong components of the reserve's setting, feeling and association.

Water played a key role in the success of the emigrants passing through City of Rocks. Water in this arid landscape follows the path of least resistance from the mountaintops and granite peaks through the

open basins to streams that converge on the Raft River outside of the reserve. Within the historic viewsheds, vegetation is verdant nearly year round along Circle Creek, in the meadows of Circle Creek basin, and near springs in Twin Sisters basin and Emigrant Canyon. In locations where water is less prevalent, vegetation is characterized by sagebrush and grasses in the basins and mixed scrub and pinon/juniper woodlands in the rockier and higher elevation terrain. While many introduced plant varieties are now found throughout the reserve and juniper has taken over some of the upland sage and grasslands, the open character of vegetation in the basins and dark scrub and woody vegetation in the uplands contribute to the integrity of the historic setting.

Land use within the City of Rocks has changed over time, as it no longer serves as a destination or route for emigrant traffic traveling along the California Trail or Salt Lake Alternate; however the wagon ruts and emigrant inscriptions serve as tangible evidence of past land uses. Following the California Trail era, homesteaders utilized land within the City of Rocks for farming and ranching. Homesteaders built modest farmsteads in areas close to streams and springs, attempted dryland farming in the basins, and allowed their livestock to roam throughout the reserve. These land uses resulted in significant changes to the surficial character of the landscape. Eventually, droughts rendered dryland farming unprofitable and severe winter weather and isolation drove people to the more temperate and populated areas in the Raft River valley. With the removal of homesteads, farming, and associated features, the landscape is gradually reverting back to the historic scene experienced by emigrants. Livestock grazing is the only remaining land use from the homesteading era. Local ranchers continue to use the landscape for livestock grazing just as they have over the past century. The scene of cattle grazing in the Circle Creek basin is reminiscent of when emigrants allowed their livestock to replenish in this same basin before the strenuous travels to Pinnacle and Granite Passes. Today, visitor facilities and overlooks have also been constructed within the reserve. In many cases, they have been built in discreet locations where visitors can fully comprehend and visualize the California Trail scene, without intruding on its character. Although these land uses post-date the period of significance, they may be compatible with the reserve's legislated mandate to "protect the historic rural setting."

The alignment of the California Trail through City of Rocks is defined by a circulation corridor that navigates through the landscape following the path of least resistance, accessing water sources and is marked by natural rock formations that became important way-finding markers. The trail was not a single set of wagon ruts through the landscape; rather it was an alternating narrow and expansive corridor that suited the needs and preferences of the emigrants, wagons, and livestock that travelled along it. The trail constricted as it entered Circle Creek basin via Echo Pass and Circle Creek. In Circle Creek and near Pinnacle Pass the trail spread out and braided in the wide open basins. At the threshold of Pinnacle Pass, the trail narrowed to single file between Eagle Rock and the Dome before quickly turning to the west past Twin Sisters via Junction Valley. Travelers along the Salt Lake Alternate entered the reserve in Emigrant Canyon and moved directly toward Twin Sisters where they met up with the main stem of the California Trail in Junction Valley. Later, the Salt Lake Alternate route was used by stage coaches travelling between Boise and Kelton, and a prominent stage station was located just east of Twin Sisters in Emigrant Canyon. Nine miles of trail along the main stem of the California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternate with City of Rocks "represent some of the best preserved segments of overland emigrant trails in the nation" (RMP 1996, 1-26).

Naturally existing views and vistas of the City of Rocks were long-awaited attractions and important way finding landmarks. The City, named for its metaphorical resemblance to the cities left behind, was a naturally bizarre and wondrous landscape documented in hundreds of emigrant diaries. Significant views include those experienced in Circle Creek basin, the view south across the basin towards Twin Sisters from the California Trail, the view northwest towards Twin Sisters from the Salt Lake Alternate, and the view southwest from Junction Valley to Granite Pass. The views experienced within and from City of Rocks are integral components of the cultural landscape and have changed very little since the California Trail era.

Archeological features from the period of significance include more than 1,650 feet of trail ruts on public land and the emigrant's inscriptions on the registry rocks in Circle Creek basin. The wagon ruts illustrate the monotonous and collective tread that characterized daily travel for the masses along the trail. The inscriptions, these still visible features; however, are the personal mementos that individual emigrants recorded on the rocks as evidence of their journey. These features are the physical remains that document the travels of hundreds of thousands of emigrants through City of Rocks.

Integrity

As established by the NHL, City of Rocks retains integrity to the period of significance. The cultural landscape, as documented in the CLI, retains integrity reflected primarily in the aspects of location, setting, feeling and association. The site's location as defined by its dramatic, natural scenery of granite monoliths, expansive basins, and vegetative composition helps convey the landscape's location and setting. Feeling and association is also conveyed through the significant views and vistas of Circle Creek basin, Twin Sisters, and Granite Pass that are still as vivid and impressive as they would have been for the overland emigrants. Secondary aspects of integrity which include design, workmanship and materials are evident by the trail's composition, wagon ruts, and emigrant inscriptions. Today, changes to the historic scene include the homestead ruins in Circle Creek basin, dirt roads, juniper pole fences and modestly located basic recreational facilities. These newer additions to the landscape are minor intrusions within the context of the massive rock features and broad, open basins that define the character of the landscape. Today, through its enabling legislation and ongoing NPS management, the City of Rocks continues to convey its historic association with westward migration.

Landscape Characteristic:

Natural Systems and Features

Natural systems and features is defined for purposes of the CLI as natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape.

Geology and Topography

The following three paragraphs are adapted from the City of Rocks National Register of Historic Places Nomination (1984, Section 7) and provide a description of the geologic history and geologic features.

The City of Rocks comprises an unusual range of granite monoliths that give the area its name. Geologic activity created the dramatic granite formations, spires, hogbacks (a sharp ridge with

steeply sloping sides), basins, saddles (ridges between peaks), and variety of open and closed viewsheds in the City of Rocks and within the larger regional landscape.

City of Rocks is located at the foot of Graham Peak (8,867 feet). In geologic terms, the City of Rocks is described as an eroded tertiary granitic intrusion into Precambrian gneisses, Elba quartzite, and Raft River narrows schists. During the past two and a half billion years, these rocks have been disturbed several times by earth movements and there is an impressive record of rock deposition, folding, faulting, and metamorphism in this area as well as throughout the Albion Range. Ancient Precambrian rocks were eventually exposed by erosion, resulting in a low central basin area flanked by ridges and hogbacks. Then a recent intrusion of soft granite (the 28 million year old Almo pluton) brought in rock that was carved into unusual shapes and towers now known as City of Rocks. Geologically interesting fins of this softer granite Almo pluton extend over an area of several miles. Harder Precambrian outcrops of older rocks provide a nearby contrast. Two adjacent rock towers, called the Twin Sisters, are illustrative of the contact between older Precambrian gneiss and younger Tertiary granite; the Precambrian gneiss sister is 100 times older than her Tertiary granite sister.

These “natural land forms through the Albion, Raft River, and Goose Creek mountain ranges create an instinctive migration route for all types of animals and humans through the mountains. This passageway is the only intramountain route through southern Idaho. The history of City of Rocks evolved from people traveling these routes for various purposes. The granite towers marked the path and acted as a beacon to those on their way through City of Rocks (RMP 1996, 2-15).

Travelers along the California Trail navigated this landscape on their way to, through, and beyond City of Rocks. According to secondary sources, “Their arrival at City of Rocks was usually an occasion for rest and an interesting respite from the arduous journey. As the emigrants climbed among the unusual rock formations, they recorded their names on the eroded granite faces, and in time these rocks became covered with the names of past travelers” (Study of Management Alternatives 1987, 51). Within the City of Rocks National Reserve, natural features that have importance to the migration period include the conical knolls that mark the east entrance to City of Rocks; the City of Rocks basin in Circle Creek, including the granitic monoliths; the Twin Sisters basin, including the basin itself, the Twin Sisters formation and Pinnacle Pass; the defile that includes Emigrant Canyon, which defines the route of the Salt Lake Alternate; and, the basin south of the Twin Sisters, which defined the route southwestward and on to Granite Pass” (Caywood 1997, Section 7, 7). These unique landforms within City of Rocks continue to define the historic landscape while drawing contemporary recreationists, particularly rock climbers, to the reserve.

The following paragraph has been adapted from the CIRO Foundation Statement, 2007, 12 and 31:

Today, City of Rocks provides one the highest quality granite face-climbing areas in the United

States. The multiple handholds and footholds presented by the unique surface features on the granite spires and domes provide opportunities for easy to moderate rock-face climbing. Because of the unique assortment and variety of surface features on the granite at City of Rocks, climbing routes are generally not difficult. The remote setting and natural beauty of the landscape increases its value as a climbing area by providing the solitude climbers cherish. Rock climbing is regulated through a permit process for all new climbing routes. Technical rock climbing is closed on the Twin Sisters and all other rocks within the designated California Trail corridor.

Climate

The Comprehensive Management Plan describes the climate within City of Rocks. The following paragraph is adapted from page 109:

City of Rocks National Reserve has a semiarid climate characterized by low to moderate precipitation, great extremes in both daily and seasonal temperatures, and low relative humidity. Average annual precipitation is approximately 14 inches at the lower elevations of the reserve and may exceed 22 inches in the highest areas near Graham Peak. Most precipitation occurs from March through June. Average snow depths for higher elevations during March and April range between 35 and 68 inches. The summers are hot and dry with frequent thunderstorms. As a result of the relatively low amount of precipitation received in the area, scrub and sagebrush remain as predominant vegetation features, defining the character of the landscape.

California Trail emigrants passed through City of Rocks between June and September, with the majority of traffic occurring in August. As noted by Caywood, "Timing was critical to westward migration; travelers attempted to complete their journeys during the spring and summer months, when graze was most plentiful for the livestock, and when adverse weather was not likely to interfere with travel. The City of Rocks, Pinnacle Pass and Granite Pass would not have been accessible to wagon or pedestrian travel during the winter months due to snow accumulations" (1997, 7-6).

Hydrology

Surface water is limited to a few small headwater streams and springs within City of Rocks. Graham Creek, Circle Creek, and waters from springs in Twin Sisters basin and Emigrant Canyon flow east toward the Raft River. Other creeks and headwaters include Trail Creek and the headwaters of Emery Canyon.

During the California Trail era, Circle Creek was the primary water source in City of Rocks, providing year round fresh and clean water. Emigrants chose to overnight in the Circle Creek basin, near Camp Rock, Treasure Rock and Register Rock. These areas provided ample room to camp, cook, and spend the night amongst family and fellow travelers, while allowing the livestock to graze and replenish their energy for the next day's travel. In the basins, water naturally irrigated meadows for forage and grazing. The emigrants used water for their livestock and personal use from Circle Creek and the springs and intermittent water courses in

Twin Sisters basin and Emigrant Canyon.

Hydrology also impacted the development of settlement and grazing post-period of significance in the locale. Although these periods of development do not contribute to the California Trail cultural landscape, a brief discussion is necessary to understand development in City of Rocks. The following paragraph about the settlement period has been adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, Section 7, 7:

Settlers of the City of Rocks had "to adapt to the harsh climate, short growing season and limited water. The steep surrounding mountains influenced settlement patterns, with homesites on the gentlest slopes located near natural springs or other water sources." Dry land farms and fields were situated in the flood plains and basins to maximize the amount of natural water flow. "Irrigation works within City of Rocks National Reserve were simple gravity systems, designed by builders who took advantage of both gradient and topography to create water impoundments which then fed ditch systems...Historic irrigation improvements are limited to those on Circle Creek, developed in association with the Tracy's Circle Creek ranch..." and those associated with the Moon settlement in Emigrant Canyon. Additionally, grazing and ranching to this day is heavily influenced by the seasonality of water flow within the City of Rocks.

Native Vegetation

The Comprehensive Management Plan (1994, 112-114) for the reserve identifies six plant communities in the City of Rocks. These include:

1) Piñon/juniper woodlands and forests in the rockier and rougher terrain cover 37% of the reserve. These trees (*Pinus monophylla*, single-leaf piñon and *Juniperus osteosperma*, Utah juniper) can grow to 30 feet in height, but are generally scrubby, less than 15 feet tall and almost as wide. This forest type is the most visibly prominent on the slopes surrounding the basins in the City of Rocks. Based on a historic photograph circa 1871 – 1872 (National Archives #77 KS-44-105), compared to present day views the piñon/juniper woodlands have grown up reducing the size of previously open spaces. However, due the diminutive stature of these forests, their influence is not on the overall sense of space, but rather is generally restricted to specific historic views.

2) Big Sagebrush/Grasslands cover the open basin floors representing 37% of the reserve. This community originally would have appeared as a mosaic of open stands of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) with an understory of native perennial grasses such as Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*). Sagebrush steppe vegetation in its natural condition is scarce in Southern Idaho. Continued human and livestock use have modified the community so it is now monotypic stands of big sagebrush interspersed with plants with little or no forage value such as tansy mustard, and exotic Russian thistle, cheatgrass, and halogeton (toxic to livestock). Crested wheatgrass introduced in the early 1950s range improvement programs dominates the understory where the range has been improved for livestock.

3) Mixed scrub covers approximately 8.7% of the reserve, confined to the higher slopes. This visually open community includes such species as the mountain big sagebrush, mountain snowberry, service berry and bitter brush with other shrubs, grasses and herbs growing in opening between the shrubs.

4) Mountain woodlands (6.8% of the reserve) include groves of aspen, stands of Douglas fir and lodgepole pine and are often interspersed with high elevation meadows (2% of the reserve) located on the uppermost stony, grassy slopes of the reserve. The quaking aspen community occurs in canyons or other areas containing perennial or intermittent streams. These groves can include narrowleaf poplar and thinleaf alder, service berry, with chokecherry and snowberry creating visual thickets below the slender tree trunks.

5) Riparian vegetation is limited to the small portion of the reserve along stream courses and springs. This vegetation occurs in the important transition zone between the aquatic and terrestrial communities and provides food, water and cover for both wildlife and livestock. Overgrazing has altered much of the riparian area in the reserve, accelerating soil erosion and eliminating many of the typical riparian plant species. Typical riparian plants include aspen, willow, Rocky Mountain maple, box-elder, thinleaf alder, choke-cherry, rushes, sedges and bluegrasses.

6) Mountain Mahogany Scrub occurs on some of the higher mountain slopes where, due to steep rocky conditions; it is more successful than the surrounding piñon/juniper. Some of these stands are nearly pure curleaf mountain mahogany, while in other locations it is intermixed with limber pine, mountain snowberry, Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass.

Emigrants traveling through the City of Rocks during the period of significance would have seen and experienced a landscape covered with native vegetation representative of the six vegetation communities. While emigrants primarily traveled through the mixed sagebrush/grasslands on the basin floors and the lower elevation riparian zones that drain the basins, they would have also seen the woodlands and scrub in the higher elevation areas of the reserve. Descriptions of these vegetative communities exist in diaries and oral histories and are visible in historic photographs from the 1800s.

In the mixed sagebrush/grassland basins, the trail alignment(s) was denuded of most vegetation by wagon, cattle, and foot. Where the trail spread out and settlers nooned or camped overnight, vegetation was trampled and thinned. Beyond the corridor, the composition of the sagebrush and grasses varied from knee to shoulder height and included big sagebrush, Idaho fescue, arrowleaf balsamroot, rabbit brush, antelope bitterbrush, and bluebunch wheatgrass. It is evident from diaries and oral histories that emigrants experienced the open character of the basins and marveled at the surrounding rock monoliths, spires, and the landscape's forms and features. During the homesteading period and up to present, the composition of the mixed sagebrush/grasslands has been altered through the clearing and cultivation of fields, herbicide treatments, range improvements that introduced exotic species, and decades of livestock

grazing. As a result, there has been a noticeable shift in the composition of the sagebrush/grasslands, with an increase in sagebrush and quantifiable decrease in the amount of grasslands.

The riparian vegetation zones along streams and near springs were water sources for travelers and their livestock during the emigration period. Constant use denuded and trampled the vegetation, including aspen, willow, Rocky Mountain maples, box-elder, thinleaf alder, chokecherry, rushes, sedges, and blue grasses. During the settlement period, springs and stream channels were altered to suit agricultural needs. Circle Creek provides water to several impoundments that are used to supply a small system of field ditches for a hay field. The continued use of the area for hay cultivation in the spring and summer, followed by turning cattle into the stubble field to graze in the fall, has largely prevented the regeneration of riparian vegetation.

The remainder of the listed plant communities (piñon/juniper woodlands, mixed scrub, mountain woodlands and mountain mahogany scrub) occurs in the higher elevations of the reserve. These vegetation communities were visible from the California Trail corridor near Granite Peak, on the upper edges of the Circle Creek basin, and near Twin Sisters. Several emigrants described the woodland areas as “mountains covered with pine and cedar trees” (Argo Morris 2005, 39). Prior to the establishment of the U.S. Forest Service, these areas remained open and unclaimed, and would have been used as rangeland during the early settlement period. After the establishment of the U.S. Forest Service, the areas continued to be used for livestock grazing. Settlers cut Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, limber pine, and juniper for house logs, poles, and for fence posts which resulted in some selective thinning in areas, particularly in the Graham Peak area.

Repeat photography and oral histories depict and describe changes in the composition of plant communities toward a dominance of woody perennials and non-native annual herbs. For example, pinyon pine and juniper have taken over mixed scrub and sagebrush/grasslands as seen on the Twin Sisters’ apron (Argo Morris 2005). These compositional shifts have been associated with intense grazing, dryland farming and more recently recreational use. Absence of frequent fire on the reserve also has reduced the extent of open herbaceous areas and favored development of fire-sensitive shrubs such as the big sagebrush, and continued the expansion of the piñon/juniper and mahogany communities. Federal management practices such as the suppression of fires, concentration of visitor activities, grazing leases, noxious weed control and protection of fragile areas, such as wetlands and riparian areas, continue to affect the vegetation patterns over the long term.

While the composition of these vegetation communities has changed to varying degrees, their general character remains largely intact. The sagebrush/grasslands continue to provide an open and expansive landscape where the City of Rocks’ signature monoliths and landforms can still be viewed and admired much as they were during the California Trail era. The riparian zones continue to be meandering swathes of green during the dry summer seasons, providing water

and respite to livestock as well as recreationists. The higher elevation plant communities dominated by woodlands and scrub still heighten the sense of enclosure in the Circle Creek basin and demarcate the basin floors from the basin edges and walls.

Ultimately, several natural systems influenced the westward migration along the California Trail through City of Rocks between 1843 and 1869, including geology, climate, hydrology, and native vegetation. Additionally, natural systems and features influenced the post-period of significance settlement and homesteading eras of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Natural Systems and Features #1: Photo showing the distinctive Twin Sisters formation, which served as a landmark along the California Trail (NPS PWR-SEA, 2006).



Natural Systems and Features #2: Granite monoliths with the upper spires of Circle Creek Basin in the distance. The juniper fence in the foreground is part of the Y Corral located near Elephant Rock (NPS PWR-SEA, 2006).

Land Use

For the purposes of the CLI, land use is defined as the principal activities in the landscape that have formed, shaped, or organized the landscape as a result of human activity.

Land uses within City of Rocks reflect the intent and needs of the people who have traveled to and through City of Rocks and called it a destination, a home, and place of work. During the period of significance, the City of Rocks area was a fascinating rest stop for emigrants traveling along the California Trail. Prior and post-dating the period of significance, land uses have also included a place to collect natural resources for American Indians, prospectors and homesteaders, a rest stop for the Boise to Kelton stage route, a fertile grazing area for rancher's livestock, free land to homestead and dryland farm, and a unique and challenging rocky landscape for recreation.

The reserve is significant for its rich historical heritage associated with the California Trail and its beautiful and unique geologic features. Additionally, hints of past settlement and ranching and grazing activities remain evident and may be compatible with the park's legislated mandate.

Evidence of these past and present land uses is prevalent in the landscape.

Pre-Period of Significance: American Indian Use and Habitation

Archeological evidence indicates that the first people to inhabit southern Idaho and the region associated with the City of Rocks were Late Pleistocene large game hunters. Later, as a result of the areas excellent grazing resources, pinion pine nuts, game animals, and vegetable roots, the upper Raft River and the City of Rocks served as a "Shoshoni seasonal village center" and summer range for the Shoshone's extensive horse herds (Wells 1990, 2-3). In the 1900s, Bannock and Shoshone traveled from the Fort Hall Reservation to gather pinion pine nuts and trade with the homesteaders and area residents, often staying for weeks at a time. Over the decades their modes of transportation changed, first arriving by buggy and team and later by car. Furthermore, Bannock and Shoshone people also returned to hold ceremonies and camp near Twin Sisters. These land uses continued through the 1970s, although only archeological sites from early use remain to provide evidence of American Indians land uses (HRS 1996, 19-20).

Period of Significance: Overland Migration: California Trail

The following section has been adapted from Janene Caywood's 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, Section 7, 4.

The land use for which the City of Rocks National Reserve is best known is a transportation corridor; a place that people traveled through. While fur trappers had explored the region by the mid 1820s, the City of Rocks did not gain recognition as a wagon route until 1843 when Joseph B. Chiles traveled through the area via Granite Pass. By the late 1840s, the route through the reserve had been well established and heavily utilized as a result of its key location. The selection of this area as a component of the main westward emigration route was entirely dependent upon its natural characteristics, most notably its topography. The individuals who pioneered and promoted various routes, did so on the basis of the needs of the emigrants who would follow. They took advantage of the natural land contours to seek the path of least resistance for wagons and livestock, and when necessary diverted to provide water and livestock forage in locations rich in these natural resources. City of Rocks is located just north of Granite Pass, the main topographic defile that marked the transition from the routine of everyday travel to the more arduous conditions of the long trek along the Humboldt River and "Forty Mile Desert" past the Humboldt Sink.

The shallow grassy basins within City of Rocks, provided "nooning" areas, where travelers could rest mid-day, before proceeding to Pinnacle and Granite passes. The limited size of the basins would have restricted the grazing resources at the camp sites near "Register Rock" and "Camp Rock" – these sites being quickly exhausted in the late summer months. It is likely that the Raft River Valley (five miles east), Big Cove (near Almo), and Junction Valley (8 miles west) would have been often used as camping sites, particularly in the years of heaviest traffic.

The unusual monoliths that outcrop along the basin walls and floors have fascinated many visitors. Diary entries from travelers of the California Trail reveal the manner in which these predominantly eastern travelers interpreted the unusual landscapes of the West. Not only did travelers write in their diaries, they wrote their names, origins, and destinations on the monoliths. The City of Rocks became a landmark along the trail.

Today, features and remnants that help to convey the historic westward migration through the City of Rocks still exist. They include trail ruts, topographical indicators of the trail routes, inscription rocks, geological landmarks with cultural value, historically important viewsheds, and encampments sites (HRS 1996, 114).

Post Period of Significance

Kelton Stage Station and Route

As emigrant wagon traffic through the City of Rocks began to diminish, other land uses began to emerge. Between 1869 and 1882, the Kelton Stage Route passed through the reserve. To serve customers traveling along the route, a stage coach station was constructed on the Salt Lake Alternate route to the east of the junction of the old California Trail. The station provided weary travelers with a place to rest and hot meals. Between 1882 and 1884, construction of the Oregon Short Line was completed, eliminating the need for the Kelton-Boise stage lines. In the 1920s and 1930s, the salvaged remnants of the station were used to construct buildings for the Moon homestead, thereby obscuring site evidence of the stage coach station land use. This stage station and Moon homestead are located on private property.

Settlement: Homesteading and Dryland Farming

Homesteading and dryland agriculture also played an important role in the early settlement and development of the reserve. By 1888, George W. Lunsford filed a claim for 160 acres on Circle Creek. By 1900, the majority of the lands in the major drainage basins had been withdrawn from the public domain during earlier phases of homesteading. Between 1895 and 1920 there were at least six identifiable ranches in the City of Rocks area (Little 1994, 2). Sagebrush was cleared, fences and roads were constructed and crops were planted. By 1920, a drought developed forcing agriculturalists to abandon their fields. Later, grazing activities ensued on lands that once had been agricultural. For the most part, attempts to reside within the City of Rocks on a year-round basis failed. Although some homestead parcels remained in private ownership, their owners incorporated these lands into much larger ranch land holdings.

Today, the number of extant resources remaining from the settlement period is small compared to the number of improvements that once were present within the reserve. The most common structures of the settlement period are the fences and gates that mark the boundaries of homestead withdrawals. Fence lines are usually built along section lines, and reflect the pattern of withdrawing land according to government land surveys. Although the fence materials may have been replaced overtime during routine maintenance, most fences erected on private lands

are still made of juniper posts and barbed-wire. These fences continue to mark section lines and currently separate livestock pastures (HRS 1996, 116). During the homesteading era, locals felled white and yellow pines, aspen poles, and juniper logs for home and fence construction. Some evidence of this timber harvesting still exists on the hillsides in the Circle Creek basin.

The remains of the residential clusters associated with homestead withdrawals occur in a variety of configurations on private land within the reserve boundary. Most of these homesites once contained houses, hen houses/chicken coops, pig pens, corrals, miscellaneous sheds, cellars, an occasional barn, developed springs, miles of fencing, and agricultural fields. The more prosperous irrigated and stock claims of George David, Mary Ann and William Tracy, George Lunsford (sold to William Tracy), Margaret and John Hansen, and Eugene Durfee also boasted stables, granaries, hay yards, stockyards, and modest dam and trench irrigation systems. Today, most of these homesites have been reduced to simple artifact scatters and depressions. They include the Mikesell homesite in Twin Sisters Basin (also called the “Heath Canyon Homestead” or “Twin Sisters Homestead”), the Charles Fairchild homesite (also called the “High Homestead” or “Trail Creek Homestead”), the Thomas Fairchild homesite in Emery Canyon, the Walter Mooso homesite west of Twin Sisters, and the John Hanson homesite south of Elephant Rock. Today, only two of the complexes, James Moon and William Tracy homesteads, contain substantial above-ground building remains – and these remains are in ruin and are located on private property.

The Moon Homestead (private property) was constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s on the former location of the State Station in Emigrant Canyon. Joseph Moon dismantled the stage station buildings and salvaged the logs for the construction of his homestead (HRS 1996, 51-54 and RMP 1996, 1-27). Today, four historic structures are still standing.

The Nicholson Ranch (private property) also known as the Tracy or Circle Creek Ranch retains the residential cluster, irrigation improvements and an intact hay meadow. This property is privately owned and is located in the Circle Creek basin near the California Trail corridor. Beginning in 1901, the Tracy family spent years developing the property, constructing a substantial stone house and building a series of dams and ditches on Circle Creek to irrigate hay meadows. The stone used in the construction of the home is from a quarry located about one mile southwest of the homesite, on a rocky knob that is locally known as "Mica Knoll" (HRS 1996, 116-117). Today, remnants of the homesite include stone walls of the original house, a log building, barn foundation, farm equipment, well, corral, retaining wall, fences, road, and irrigation dams and ditches. The rock walls and hay derrick are evidence of Mormon cultural traditions.

Features located on public land and associated with the settlement era include the system of juniper and barbed wire fences and gates that mark the boundaries of the homestead withdrawals and two-track and dirt roads that provided access to the homesteads. Although these features are non-contributing to the California Trail era, the existing remnants of the settlement era may be compatible with the reserve’s legislated mandate to “protect the historic rural setting.”

Ranching/Grazing

The City of Rocks' most consistent and economically successful usage has been as range land. From the Northern Shoshoni who grazed their horses, to the emigrants who led thousands of sheep, cattle, horses, and mules, to the cattle and sheep drives between 1850 and 1886 and initial and subsequent homesteads between 1869 and 1910, the land was continually grazed in one form or another. "From the 1970s, when agricultural production in the City of Rocks ended to 1988, when Congress established the reserve, livestock grazing has been the only private use of the lands, public and private, within the reserve" (Grazing MP 1996, 1). Today, grazing is managed within City of Rocks by a Grazing Management Plan (1996). Grazing is managed to maintain the historic natural scene, Reserve historic and natural resources, while continuing livestock use.

Features and small-scale elements related to ranching and grazing currently exist throughout the landscape, and many of them are located on public land. Juniper post and barbed wire fences demarcate livestock grazing pastures and allotments. Ranch roads, two tracks, and cattle trailing routes are used for accessing grazing areas. In the Indian Grove area, wooden fences protect the spring from trampling by livestock, while adjacent troughs pool the pumped spring water for livestock use. A limited number of isolated corrals built with poles and dimensional lumber are remnants of earlier livestock use, and some continue to be used today. These are found in isolated areas away from residential building clusters and reflect the use of the area for livestock grazing and management. Remaining corrals include the "Y Corral" also known as the "Durfee Corral" on the former Eugene Durfee property near Elephant Rock, the "Ted King Corral" near Breadloaves in the field adjacent to Campsite #52, and the "Indian Grove Corral" (HRS 1996, 116). All of these corrals are located on NPS land.

Constructed features that were built to contain and navigate water along Circle Creek and in Emigrant Canyon continue to exist today. Six earthen dams or impoundments have been recorded within the reserve, and two of them are located on publicly owned land along Circle Creek below the Nicholson Ranch. The two publicly owned earthen impoundments, documented as Dam #1 and Dam #0 by NPS Geologist Marsha Davis, also include a system of diversion ditches, spillways, small reservoirs, and associated two tracks and dirt roads. The construction of these impoundments and water systems dates from the late 1940s or early 1950s. The system of impoundments and diversion ditches was constructed to flood areas to irrigate grass and provide fresh water for cattle.

Features located on public land and associated with the grazing and ranching include the Y Corral, Ted King Corral, Indian Grove Corral, Dam #1, Dam #0, system of juniper and barbed wire fences and gates that mark the boundaries of grazing allotments, and two-track and dirt roads that provided access to these areas. Although these features are non-contributing to the California Trail era, the existing remnants of the settlement era may be compatible with the reserve's legislated mandate to "...protect the historic rural setting."

Mining

Mining within the City of Rocks was a limited land use, and its remnants are still visible in the landscape today. Only two mines have been developed within the reserve, neither of which was formally withdrawn for mineral development. The two mines represent "moonlighting" activities of people whose primary livelihood was derived from agricultural pursuits.

The first mine is the feldspar/stone quarry located on private property on what is known as Mica Knoll, while the second mine is referred to by local residents as the "Vern White Mica Mine" and dates to ca. 1939-1940. Today, the Vern White Mica Mine site contains large pits where mica was extracted, the mills concrete foundation, the wooden mill structure and remnant metal parts that have now fallen down, and a small tailing pond below the mill. Mining features located on public land are non-contributing to the period of significance and include the Vern White mica mine and its associated features.

Recreation

Over 80,000 visitors come to the reserve annually to enjoy the plethora of recreational opportunities that the City of Rocks has to offer. Camping, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, stock trail riding, picnicking, and learning about the cultural and natural history of the City of Rocks are allowed recreational uses. Each of these recreational uses has associated constructed and landscape features, however all of these features are non-contributing elements of the cultural landscape.

There are four camping areas within the reserve; the Juniper Group camp site (also known as the Horse Camp) located in Junction Valley, the Twin Sisters group and individual campsites #1-4 at the base of Twin Sisters, the individual and group campsites #5-60 along Emery Canyon Road between Elephant Rock and Breadloaves, and the campsites #61-64 near Finger Rock. These four camping areas include campsites, tent pads, parking areas, picnic tables, fire grates, garbage cans, informational kiosks, and associated small fences. The reserve also contains nine vault toilets. They are located at Juniper Group Site, Twin Sisters Group Site, Site 12, Site 27, two at vault toilets Bath Rock parking lot, Parking Lot Rock, Bread Loaves, and at Site 62-Logger Springs Road. The vault toilets are approximately 15 feet 12 feet by 12 feet tall. They have gable roofs, siding colored to blend with the surrounding landscape, and a black upright exterior pipe rising from the vault.

There are hundreds of rock climbing routes within the City of Rocks, primarily located in and along the upper reaches of the Circle Creek basin and along the Twin Sisters ridge (excluding the Twin Sisters). Features associated with rock climbing are trails to the climbing areas, informational signs, and staging areas below and near the rocks sometimes outlined by fences. The routes themselves are evident by the bolted fixed anchors rising up from the base of the rocks to the end of the route, which is usually at the top of the rock. Today, features related to recreational use of the reserve are non-contributing elements of the cultural landscape.

Summary

The City of Rocks has a rich history characterized by several different land uses through time. Archeological evidence indicates that the City of Rocks locale served as an important pinyon nut source for Shoshoni and Bannock groups. There is also evidence that the reserve may have served as a Shoshoni seasonal village center and summer range area for horse herds. Later, emigrants traveling along the California Trail traversed through the City of Rocks. During the period of significance, emigrants left a legacy of wagon ruts and inscriptions on monolithic granite rocks. Traces of later periods of activity, which included stage coach activity, homesteading, dryland farming, mining, and ranching also appear within the landscape as non-contributing features. Contemporary, non-contributing features associated with recreational development serve to mark the most recent land use in the City of Rocks.

Non contributing buildings and structures include: Dam #0, Dam #1, “Y Corral,” “Ted King Corral,” “Indian Grove Corral,” Vern White Mica Mine wood mill structure, Vern White Mica Mine mill concrete foundation, Vern White Mica Mine tailing pond, Vault Toilets (9), Juniper post and barbed wire fences (not individually counted) and fence gates (not individually counted).

Spatial Organization

Spatial organization is defined for the purposes of the CLI as the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape. The spatial organization of the California Trail through City of Rocks is directly related to natural systems and features, topography, access to water, and views and vistas within the landscape.

Period of Significance: Overland Migration: California Trail

The route through the City of Rocks and Granite Pass was first traveled in 1843 under the leadership of experienced mountain man, Joseph R. Walker. The trail’s route left the Snake River and proceeded south up the Raft River near the present-day town of Malta and then southwest up Cassia Creek. It left Cassia Creek near the present-day town of Elba and headed due south through the valley between the Albion Mountains to the west and the Jim Sage Mountains to the east. Near the present-day town of Almo and headwaters of Edwards Creek, the emigrants then headed southwest through the City of Rocks to Granite Pass and then on to Goose Creek in the northwest corner of present-day Utah.

Within City of Rocks National Reserve, the California Trail entered the reserve via narrow entrances at Echo Gap (also called Echo Pass) and Circle Creek. These “two narrow passages are defined by the close alignment of three steep topographic features”- the southern portion of a ridge descending from Graham Peak, a small steep-sided hogback, and the northern face of Smoky Mountain (HRS 1996, 114). Emigrants sometimes dispersed in the Circle Creek basin and near Camp Rock, Treasure Rock and Register Rock. These sites were high quality campsites and offered natural meadows for livestock to forage, reliable water, and abundant and bizarre rock formations to explore. The California Trail then fanned out and headed south. Travelling along this corridor, the Twin Sisters stood prominently to the southwest, as emigrants crossed the wide basin sometimes referred to as Twin Sisters basin and up a gradual ascent to Pinnacle Pass. Pinnacle Pass was a choke point where the braided and parallel trails converged

into single file between Eagle Rock and the Dome. Today, horizontal incisions appear on granite boulders, located at the top of Pinnacle Pass. Local historians speculate that these marks were created by barbed wire, although, others believe that the incisions were created by steels cables that were used to pull the wagons over the decomposed granite. While it is clear that the pass marked the threshold between the arduous uphill travel to a steep and quick decline down the south side of Pinnacle Pass, the origin of these horizontal incisions remains unknown. After Pinnacle Pass, the trail continued southwest below Twin Sisters and constricted near the head of Emigrant Canyon before making a wide arc around a hillside and then heading due west through Junction Valley and past the reserve boundary.

The Salt Lake Cutoff, also called the Salt Lake Alternate, “was established in 1848 by Samuel Hensley, a member of the 1841 Bartleson Bidwell party, and first traveled by H. W. Bigler's Mormon battalion, returning to Salt Lake City following the Mexican-American War. The route crossed the Bear River approximately one week (80 miles) north of Salt Lake City” (HRS 1996, 33). The Salt Lake Cutoff then headed west northwest via Pilot Springs and the Raft River Narrows. It entered the reserve at the extreme southeast corner along an intermittent stream channel in Emigrant Canyon. It then followed the channel to the south of Twin Sisters and joined the main stem of the California Trail in Junction Valley.

Post Period of Significance

Kelton Stage Station and Route

The Kelton to Boise stage route followed the Salt Lake Alternate into the reserve, met with the main stem of the California Trail in Junction Valley, and progressed westward beyond the reserve boundary. The stage route along this corridor was selected because it was the shortest distance between destinations and was an already established route. During this period, a stage station was constructed in Emigrant Canyon near a spring. Situated over a mile south of Twin Sisters and then 3/4 mile east, this location was found suitable because of the fresh year round water supply as well as its proximity to the most renowned monoliths within City of Rocks. Decades after the stage station closed, the building timbers were used to construct the Moon homestead.

Homesteading and Dryland Farming, Ranching and Grazing, and Mining

The following section has been adapted from Janene Caywood’s 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination 1997, Section 7, 6:

The spatial organization of subsequent human activities was closely tied to both natural and political factors. The predominant natural factors were access to fresh water from springs and creeks, climate conditions, and suitable land for buildings, dryland farming, and homesteading. The political factors were the Homestead Act of 1864 and subsequent legislation that provided the opportunity to settle the land and dictate the acreage that could be claimed. A review of the General Land Office patent files indicates that 27 patented homestead claims, with a variety of

improvements, once filled the three basins within the reserve. These claims were generally located in low elevation areas close to water and open land, such as the Circle Creek Basin, Twin Sisters Basin, Trail Creek area, Emigrant Canyon, and Emery Canyon. Few of the improvements associated with these claims (buildings and structures associated with farmsteads, irrigation ditches and dams, cultivated fields) are visible today. One physical manifestation of the settlement period that does remain is the pattern of land withdrawal. This pattern is seen in the fence lines (boundary demarcations) that continue to mark the boundaries of many homestead claims.

Although later road systems overlap the earlier migration routes in some areas (mostly where topography continues to restrict transportation), later historic and modern road development is influenced predominantly by political land divisions of the late homestead period. Thus the later county roads established in the area follow section lines rather than the earlier “desire lines” that did not take into account private land boundaries.

Other spatial organization patterns are directly tied to the location of resources. Livestock trailing routes bisect the City of Rocks and connect the lower- and mid-elevation grazing areas outside the reserve with the summer and fall pastures within the reserve and in the upland forests (federal land administered by the US Forest Service). Several open pits on the ridges on the north side of Twin Sisters Basin bear witness to mineral extraction.

Recreation

The location of recreational sites at City of Rocks depends on the requirements and desires associated with particular recreational activities. For example, rock climbing is most prevalent in the “middle city” to the west and northwest of Bath Rock, where there are numerous rock climbing routes. Additionally, recreational facilities and activities are restricted to public land accessible by road or trail. The majority of campsites, parking areas, restrooms, visitor information stations, trails, and rock climbing activities are located in the western uplands of Circle Creek basin. These facilities are effectively screened from the California Trail viewsheds by granite monoliths.

Circulation

Circulation is defined for the purposes of the CLI as the spaces, features, and applied material finishes which constitute systems of movement in a landscape.

California Trail

The 2,000-mile California Trail was a westward mass migration route for over 200,000 men, women, and children between 1841 and 1869. Beginning in 1843, the City of Rocks became a prominent and memorable location for emigrants along the California Trail to rest the stock before entering the dreaded Humboldt desert, while marveling at the area’s geologic wonders. For emigrants heading west via the Salt Lake Cutoff beginning in 1848, the City of Rocks, and more specifically the Twin Sisters conical rock formations, marked the location where the Cutoff regrouped with the main California Trail. Today, nine miles of the trail corridor along the main stem of the California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternate exist within the reserve and “represent some of the best preserved segments of overland emigrant trails in the nation”

(RMP 1996, 1-26). Three and half miles of the trail are located on publicly owned land.

The route through the City of Rocks, sometimes called the Fort Hall Road, was one short segment of the 2,000-mile long Trail from Missouri to California, yet it is illustrative of the trail's many characteristics and forms. The California Trail, like other westward trails, was "a compromise between the shortest distance between points, the obstacles posed by the natural environment and the requirements of the travelers of the trail" (Caywood 1997, 7-6). "[Emigrants] took advantage of the natural land contours to seek the path of least resistance (for wagons and livestock) and, when necessary, diverted to access natural resources (water and livestock forage), and human services (supply centers, blacksmith shops, etc.). Emigrants attributed special importance, (cultural value), to various natural features observed along the trail — usually features that broke the monotony of slow travel through a landscape that changed little from day to day" (HRS 1996, 118). Along the trail, emigrants, wagons, and livestock fanned out in expansive featureless areas, braided their paths where the topographic relief allowed, and constricted single file through narrow and often steep passes.

Conditions along the trail within the City of Rocks would have differed depending on the season of travel. The first emigrants of the year traveling in May and June would have seen a verdant landscape with green meadows available for livestock grazing, creeks and springs still fresh with snowmelt, and soil intermittently dry, muddy, or wet depending on recent rainfall. The trail route would have been distinguishable mostly by topography, landscape features, and by trampled vegetation and wagon ruts left from the previous years travel. Later in the season, the vegetation would have dried and browned, conditions would have been dusty and hot, and vegetation would have been severely trampled along the corridor and denuded by livestock. The springs and creeks would have been muddied by continuous passage and overuse. Discarded wagon remains and personal effects to lighten the load before entering the Humboldt Desert would have been scattered throughout the area. The trail's conditions were maintained by summertime use between 1843 and 1869. After 1869, vegetation began to grow again and eventually overtook much of the trail's alignment.

Today, evidence of the California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate is still visible along the historic routes through the City of Rocks. Primary evidence includes trail ruts, wagon-wheel worn rocks, and linear scars visible from aerial photographs. In this CLI, the term "rut" applies to two-track wagon alignments as well as swales. Most often, the trail ruts appear as parallel sets of tracks that are cut into the earth and denuded of vegetation. In some areas the trail ruts are sets of parallel tracks left by wagon wheels, in other areas only a single pair of tracks is visible. "Single sets of tracks tend to occur in topographically restricted areas, multiple alignments tend to occur in more level areas where drivers were able to spread out and travel abreast of one another. Multiple tracks may also be an indication of the need to avoid certain obstacles" (HRS 1996, 114). Within the reserve, the trail ruts are discontinuous and cross a patchwork of public and private properties. For more detailed information about the trail ruts, refer to the Archeological Sites section.

Non-contributing Roads

Since the period of significance, sections of the California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate corridors have been used as more recent transportation routes. From 1850-1883, the California Trail section in Junction Valley and Salt Lake Alternate route was used as a mail delivery and stage coach route. When land use in City of Rocks turned toward dryland agriculture, a new network of informal roads developed to access homesteads within the City of Rocks, “to timber” forested areas to harvest trees and logs for construction, and connect with the regional transportation system. These routes were again altered as grazing and then recreation took over as dominant land uses. Today, the network of dirt and two-track roads within City of Rocks provides evidence of previous and contemporary land uses. The maintained roads are used by recreationists, through traffic between Almo and Oakley, and for use by local ranchers tending to their livestock.

The maintained primary roads are approximately 30 feet wide graded dirt roads; they navigate through City of Rocks along both curvilinear and straight alignments to destinations within and beyond the reserve. Features associated with these primary roads include parking areas, occasional pullouts, narrow shoulders, culverts, and signage. The east entrance road from Almo follows the historic route of the California Trail via Echo Gap into the Circle Creek basin. Near Register Rock the road splits. One road continues to follow the direction of the California Trail to the Junction Entrance at the southwestern entrance. The other road heads northwest from Register Rock to the Emery Canyon entrance through prime camping and rock climbing areas of the reserve. Near the Emery Canyon Entrance, the road splits with one road heading out of the reserve, and the other road continuing north to Indian Grove and beyond the reserve boundary to the adjacent Sawtooth National Forest. The Circle Creek Overlook is a new road that branches off the main entrance road about ½ mile from the Almo entrance.

Unmaintained and gated private roads and two-tracks connect with the primary road system, providing access to private property and more remote areas within the reserve.

Non-contributing Trails

The trail network within City of Rocks developed since the period of significance includes approximately 30 miles of trail and is designed to access rocks and natural features and areas of the reserve for recreational use. All of the trails are available to foot traffic, and a limited number of trails are available for equestrian and mountain bicycle use. The trails are most numerous in the Circle Creek watershed. Most of these dirt trails are approximately two feet in width; trail features include small scale signage, steps, culverts, and railings at steep locations.

Summary

Over the past 150 years, circulation routes through and within City of Rocks have been altered to serve the uses of travelers, homesteaders, private property owners, and recreationists. While existing roads and trails provide the most visible evidence of the circulation system, the California Trail remnants are rare and historically significant features of westward migration and contribute to the overall character of the cultural landscape.

The contributing circulation features include the trail alignment and trail ruts that are located on public land. Non-contributing roads and trails include the City of Rocks NR Almo Entrance Road, the City of Rocks Junction Entrance Road, Emery Canyon Road, Indian Grove Road, Circle Creek Overlook Road, Emigrant Canyon Two Track, Nematode Two Track, Taylor Spring Two Track connecting to Bruesch Ranch Road, and several other smaller two tracks located on public land to former homesteads, the Circle Creek impoundments, rock and other features.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Circulation #1: California Trail wagon ruts ascending southward to Pinnacle Pass (NPS PWR-SEA, 2006).



Circulation #2: Contemporary photo showing Junction Valley looking westward to Granite Pass (CIRO).

Views and Vistas

Views are defined for the purposes of the CLI as the expansive and/or panoramic prospect of a broad range of vision which may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. Naturally existing views and vistas of the City of Rocks were the hallmark of the California Trail experience through southern Idaho; they are important because they are views experienced by travelers trying to find their way along the trail. To be surrounded by the majestic granite spires and monoliths in Circle Creek basin, to witness the Twin Sisters towering landmark from the California Trail and Salt Lake Cut-Off, and then to view Granite Pass from Junction Valley were long-awaited attractions that marked a significant threshold along the California Trail. The views at City of Rocks are quite different from those on the surrounding open plains- they are defined by the encircling stone formations that alternatively close in and open up, adding great variety to the scenery. The distinctive rock formations of the landscape play a dominant role in establishing the character of the City of Rocks cultural landscape (Caywood 1997, Section 9, 7-8).

Views of Circle Creek Basin

Emigrants on the main California Trail would have seen the granite outcroppings at the top edges of Little Cove, just northeast of Circle Creek basin, while still in the main Raft River valley. However, as they traveled west via Echo Gap and Circle Creek's narrow water gap and into Circle Creek basin, the first true sightings of the distinctive rock formations would

quickly lead to an open, expansive valley with a flowing creek, ringed by towering rock formations. This basin offered a sense of security and comfort by being enclosed and protected by the famed granite rocks that inspired the name, City of Rocks. The City of Rocks Suitability/Feasibility Study and Historic Resources Study provide the following descriptions of the views of Circle Creek Basin, “The visual impact of the scenery remains: as one crosses the flat, monotonous sagebrush grazing-range, there is the sudden, startling contrast of those amazing rocks on the horizon, clustered in a city-like formation” (Suitability/Feasibility Study 1973, 15-17). “Although the basin is actually quite large (one and one-quarter miles east/west by three-quarters of a mile north/south), the towering scale of the rocks makes the basin appear smaller and more sheltered than it actually is. It is not until one walks from one side of the basin to the other and stands at the base of a large outcrop that one realizes the monoliths’ great size. The viewshed of the Circle Creek basin, incorporating all lands from the stream channel to the top of the peaks that encircle the basin, represents a historically important view and setting for the Circle Creek encampment and the California Trail” (HRS 1996, 115).

View of Twin Sisters and Pinnacle Pass from the California Trail

As emigrants progressed on the California Trail past the Circle Creek basin near Register Rock and traveled south through Twin Sisters basin toward Pinnacle Pass, the Twin Sisters presented a prominent wayfinding landmark in the far distance across the next open valley. The viewshed was defined by dark pinon/juniper covered Smoky Mountain to the east, the rocky ridge and series of bedrock outcrops that rimmed the west side of the Twin Sisters basin, the sagebrush/grassland foreground, and the distant panoramic view of the Twin Sisters ridge. The Twin Sisters ridge formation was a linear jumble of crags and peaks that extended southeast and formed an arc that rimmed the southwest edge of the Heath Canyon basin. Pinnacle Pass was located on this ridge about one half mile southeast of the Twin Sisters tandem spires which marked the highest and most prominent points in the viewshed. Pinnacle Pass was the low saddle between Eagle Rock and the Dome that funneled California Trail travelers into the next drainage south. Today, this view still reveals the trail alignment across Heath Canyon basin below to Pinnacle Pass and represents an historically important setting for the California Trail (RMP 1996, 2-20 and HRS 1996, 115).

View of Twin Sisters from the Salt Lake Alternate

From the Salt Lake Alternate, emigrants traveled west through Emigrant Canyon to meet the main stem of the California Trail approaching Twin Sisters. From their perspective, the Twin Sisters adjacent posture would have stood above the rest of the ridge and against the sky. Sloping sagebrush-covered terrain in the foreground would have focused the travelers “gazes upward. Although similar in form, this close viewing distance would have revealed their distinctive textures and coloring “(RMP 1996, 2-20). For those using the Salt Lake Alternate, the Twin Sisters was the only component of the City of Rocks observable from the trail. It marked the junction of the two trails, and for a few, the final point for choosing between California and Oregon as their final destination (HRS 1996, 115).

View of Granite Pass

Just after the Salt Lake Alternate merged with the main stem of the California Trail, the trail proceeded due west through Junction Valley. The drainage that contains the junction of the two trails represents a historically important setting. Here, the Cedar Hills blocked further southerly progress; east/west progress was facilitated by a break in the topography of the hills. Westward travel along the combined routes proceeded up a gentle incline, and then down into the valley of Junction Creek (HRS 1996, 115). Here the view to Granite Pass was the most expansive and open view of the “significant viewsheds experienced by historic travelers. Low-lying, uninterrupted vegetation created a uniform ground texture extending from the foreground through the middle ground to the distant mountain forming the skyline. The mountain pass was a subtle notch in an otherwise relatively smooth ridgeline” (RMP 1996, 2-20). Granite Pass was the next guiding landmark west of Pinnacle Pass and a major milestone on the journey to California or Oregon.

Today, sparse human-scale elements, such as the stone ruins of the Circle Creek Ranch, fencelines, and roads, dot and line the landscape but pale in the overwhelming presence of the extraordinary natural forms, features, and setting. Another noticeable change to the scene is vegetation composition, though the character of the vegetation communities is still largely intact. The Resource Management Plan states, “The variety of enclosed and expansive spaces, the rich mixture of colors and textures created by rocks and vegetation, the focal points and sense of direction provided by such distinctive landmarks as Twin Sisters, and the mystical qualities of this unusual place all contribute to a vividness that makes the City of Rocks a memorable scenic landscape” (1996, 2-20). Because the historically important views remain substantially unchanged, they contribute to the feeling and association of the City of Rocks cultural landscape (Caywood 1997, Section 7, 9).

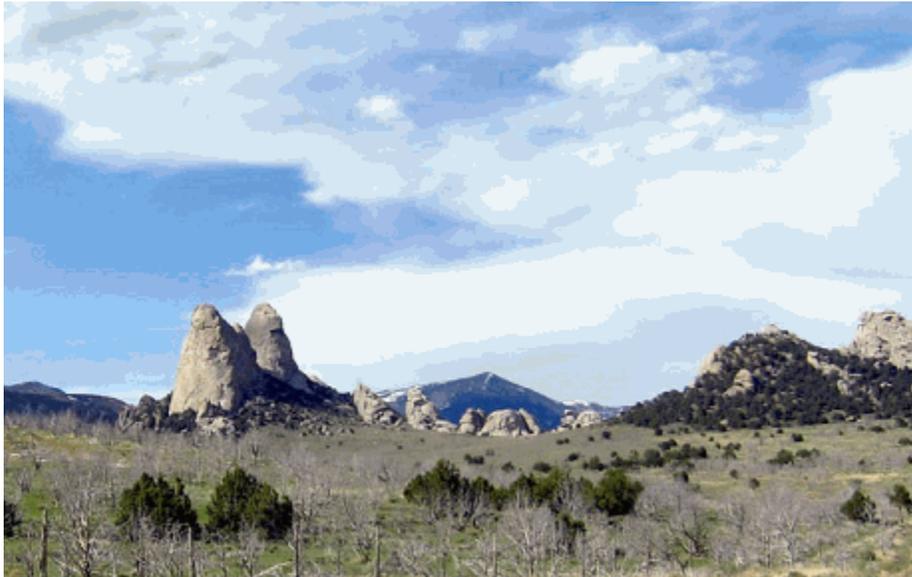
Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Views and Vistas#1: View looking towards Circle Creek Basin. The expansive views experienced in Circle Creek Basin were the first of several significant views within CIRO. Note cattle grazing in the foreground (CIRO).



Views and Vistas #2: Contemporary photo looking south, showing Circle Creek Basin in the foreground; Treasure Rock and Register Rock in the middleground; and Pinnacle Pass and Twin Sisters in the distance (NPS PWR-SEA, 2006).



Views and Vistas #3: View from the Salt Lake Alternate and California Trail junction just south of Twin Sisters. In Junction Valley, the Salt Lake Alternate merged with the main stem of the California Trail (CIRO).

Archeological Sites

Archeological sites inventoried by the CLI include the location of ruins, traces, or deposited artifacts in the landscape that are associated with the period of significance and are evidenced by the presence of either surface or subsurface features. The CLI takes every precaution not to disclose the location of sensitive archeological sites to preserve the resources.

Prehistoric Archeological Resources (Non-Contributing)

A number of archaeological excavations have taken place in northern Utah (e.g. Jennings 1978, Goebel et. al. 2004) and on the Eastern Snake River Plain (Butler 1965, Gruhn 1961, Hendrickson 2002, 2003, 2006 and Green et. al. 1998). Combined, these investigations have generated a reliable narrative concerning both the culture history and subsistence patterns of Native American groups occupying the City of Rocks area prior to contact with European-Americans. Based on radiocarbon dates and recovered fluted points from these investigations the region was occupied during the late Pleistocene by foraging groups commonly referred to as Paleoindians. A broad based foraging strategy continued throughout the early, middle and late Holocene by groups occupying the region, though there are noted changes in the tools used to procure food and the resources targeted. Even during episodes of greater aridity, the region was used by foraging groups able to adapt to the climate change by utilizing ice caves (Hendrickson 2002, 2003, 2006) and clustering along rivers (Butler 1968).

While the debate continues concerning historical continuity of groups in the Great Basin and Eastern Snake River Plain, there is a growing body of evidence that Numic speakers use and occupation of the regions surrounding City of Rocks is recent (Smith et. al. 1999, Kaestle & Smith 2001). Both City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rock State Park have

archaeology sites within their boundaries that could assist with the interpretation of past human occupation, subsistence and land use as well as provide opportunities for other anthropologically relevant topics. To date, there have been few directed surveys at City of Rocks. The emphasis of these surveys has been placed on historic resources likely to identify sites associated with the overland migration. Thus, excavated materials associated with prehistory at City of Rocks have not been fully analyzed or reported. Future archaeological efforts at City of Rocks will concentrate on the analysis of previously recovered materials and intensive survey that meets standards associated with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

California Trail Era Archeological Resources, 1843-1869 (Contributing)

Emigrants travelling along the California Trail literally left their marks on the City of Rocks landscape by inscribing their names, dates, and personal information on the many “registry rocks.” The emigrants wagons wheels incised tracks into the surface of the land, leaving hundreds of feet of clearly identifiable trail ruts along the California Trail corridor. These archeological remains are significant resources that contribute to the cultural landscape.

Emigrant Inscriptions:

The following section on emigrant inscriptions has been adapted from James W. Henderson’s 1998 Documentation of Historic Inscriptions at City of Rocks National Reserve, pp 1-4; James W. Henderson’s 2001 Documentation of Historic Inscriptions at City of Rocks National Reserve, pp 1-4, 13, and 16-17; and Janene Caywood’s 1997 City of Rocks Draft National Reserve Historic District Nomination, pp 7-14:

Most personal of the features present in the reserve are the hundreds of emigrant inscriptions where travelers signed their names, date of passage and often place of origin on natural rock features, using axle grease or, in a few cases, carving into the stone. The relatively smooth granite surfaces formed convenient “registry rocks” in spite of their fragility and tendency to exfoliate. In 1852 Eliza Ann McAuley noted that, ‘The rocks are covered as far up as one can reach or climb, with names of emigrants. We left ours with date in a conspicuous place for the boys behind.’

Within the reserve, a total of twenty-two monolithic granite outcroppings have been identified that contain emigration and post-emigration era inscriptions with a total of approximately 350 individual inscriptions overall. While there are no accurate estimates for the total of inscriptions left on rocks between 1843-1969, archeological surveys have documented those that have been preserved since the period of significance. The majority of the inscriptions are no longer present due to exfoliation of the granite surface.

The emigration era inscription rocks are primarily located in the vicinity of the Circle Creek basin. This is where emigrants often camped or nooned, temporarily leaving their livestock to graze while they inscribed their names and wandered within the granite city. The west and northwest faces of Camp Rock, Elephant’s Head, and Register Rock contain the greatest concentration and variety of writing styles, ranging from simple block to more elaborate cursive

letters. The rocks with known emigration era inscriptions located on public land include, Pagoda Rock (also known as Chicken Rock and Skeleton Head) (10CA587 CR02), the southern portion of Elephant's Head (10CA 587 CR03), Camp Rock (10CA564 CR04), Monkey's Head (10CA591 CR05), Kaiser's Helmet (10CA595 CR06), Treasure Rock (10CA595 CR 07), Carson Rock (10CA598 CR08), and Register Rock (10CA574 CR CR11). The rocks with known emigration era inscriptions located on private land include, City Limits (10CA588 CR01), the northern portion of Elephant's Head (10CA 587 CR03), Stewart Rock (10CA586 CR22), Pinnacle Pass (10CA590 CR19), Pinnacle Rock South (CR20).

The condition of these inscriptions varies widely; some are barely discernible due to weathering of the rock surface, whereas others in more protected areas remain both legible and vivid. The inscription-bearing monoliths identified by Henderson's surveys are all disintegrating through the effects of natural weathering, which is exacerbated by a combination of other impacts. The most serious degradation impacting the inscriptions is natural weathering. Hail and torrential downpours damage the fragile granite crusts and cause them to loosen and eventually exfoliate. In many of those that do remain in protected overhangs, the axle grease had broken down leaving but a faint orange colored residue present on the rockface. There are further problems from orange and black colored lichens growing on the granite surfaces. In some cases they have grown over inscriptions, rendering them totally illegible. In more recent times axle grease has been replaced by black paint, and more recently, by red spray paint. Many entries attest to people climbing on the rocks, and that practice has continued through to the present, although not appreciably on inscription-bearing rock identified by interpretive signage. Illegal campsites (fire rings) were noted directly adjacent to Pagoda, Treasure Rock, and Carson Rock. Barn swallow nests directly above sites on Camp Rock and Monkey's Head allow droppings to accumulate over inscriptions beneath them. Mud from these nests has also accumulated over inscriptions on Pagoda, Elephant's Head, and Kaiser's Helmet. Adjacent plants and grazing herbivores rub against the fragile granular layers of granite and affect the rate of disintegration.

Wagon Ruts

Like the inscriptions, the wagon ruts along the California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate alignments provide physical evidence of the thousands of emigrants who passed through City of Rocks between 1843 and 1869. In this CLI, the term "rut" applies to two-track wagon alignments as well as swales. The ruts consist "of sets of parallel wheel tracks, approximately five feet apart, incised in the earth. The wheel tracks have little or no vegetation and are cut into the earth as much as several inches. In some instances the depth and width of the ruts have been increased by erosion" (Caywood 1997, Section 7, 9).

Today, the trail ruts through the City of Rocks are discontinuous. In some areas the trail ruts are sets of parallel tracks left by wagon wheels, in other areas only a single pair of tracks is visible. Other evidence includes wagon-wheel-worn rocks, and linear scars visible primarily on aerial photographs. These remnants within the reserve cross a patchwork of properties and lay predominantly on private property.

The trail's path on public land within the reserve is limited to Echo Pass, the lower portion of Circle Creek, between Camp Rock and Register Rock, a short segment of the incline to Pinnacle Pass, and at the southwestern corner in Junction Valley. At Echo Pass and near Register Rock, trail markings have been obscured by improvements to the county road, although the trail alignment is evident simply by navigating the path of least resistance to and through the Circle Creek basin. Along Circle Creek, emigrants likely traveled on both sides of the creek, crossing it where necessary and feasible, with the goal of making it into the Circle Creek basin. Conclusive evidence of the trail along Circle Creek has been obscured by vegetation growth and interim historic and recent use.

The most complete and identifiable trail ruts on public land comprise approximately 480 feet on the incline to Pinnacle Pass and 1500 feet of Trail at the southwest corner of the reserve in Junction Valley. The trail ruts near Pinnacle Pass are nearly single file, as the wagons had to funnel up and over the Pass. The trail ruts in Junction Valley are distinguishable as several parallel paths which converge into single file at the reserve boundary. The trail ruts through Junction Valley are some of the best preserved features of the California Trail.

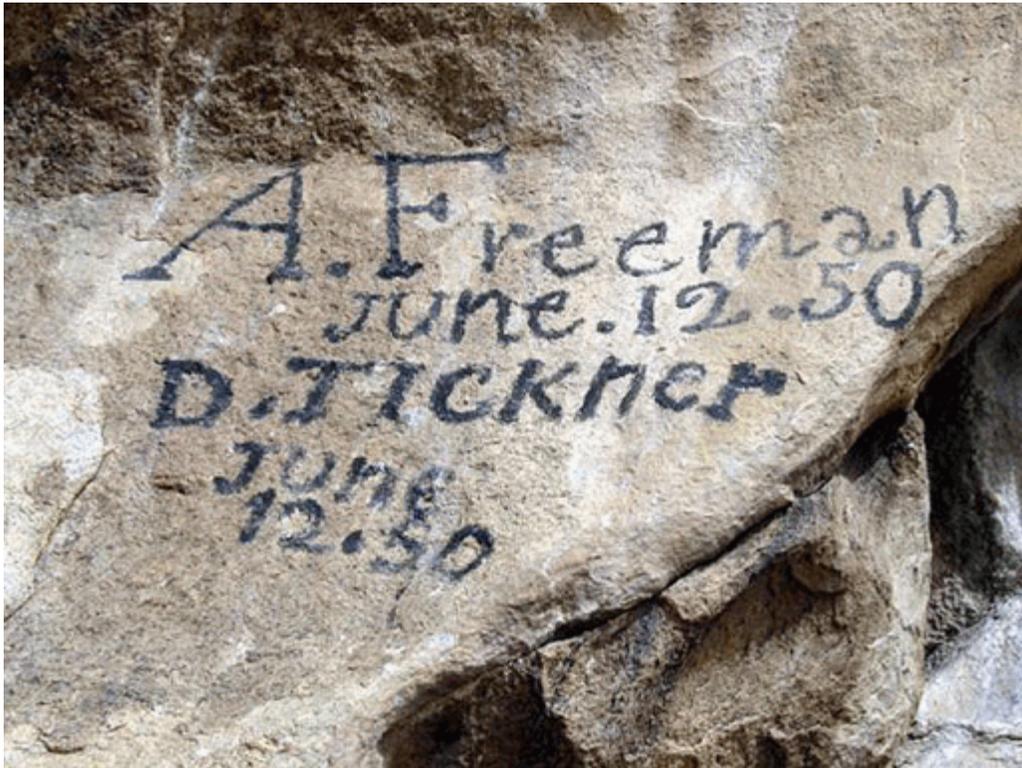
Remnants of the California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate on private property are significantly more numerous. These trail ruts are found on the incline and decline from Pinnacle Pass on the H. Olen Ward property, on the northern portion of the Simplot property near Pinnacle Pass, and on the Brent Jones and J.E. Tracy properties running parallel with the road through Junction Valley. Trail ruts along the Salt Lake Alternate that was later used as the Boise-Kelton Road are located on Simplot property.

A systematic archeological survey of the trail ruts within the reserve has not been completed to date. When the trails ruts are surveyed, this section will be updated with more accurate descriptions and information. Additionally, for a more complete discussion about the physical context of the California Trail alignment and trail ruts, refer to the Circulation section.

Post-Emigration Archeological Resources (Non-Contributing)

Archeological resources from later land uses exist throughout the reserve primarily on private land. These land uses included: homesteading, dryland farming, ranching and grazing, and mining. Archeological resources from these eras include such features as, building and structure foundations, depressions, mining trenches, artifact scatters, and remnant irrigation works. Because these resources are located on private property, they have not been assessed for this CLI.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Archeology #1: Photo showing California Trail-era emigrant inscriptions on Register Rock. Inscriptions such as these were “penned” using wagon axle grease (NPS, CIRO).



Archeology #2: Bird's eye view of inscription rocks from the peak of Smoky Mountain. The inscription rocks are located on the southern edge of Circle Creek Basin (CIRO).

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 06/11/2008

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall condition of the City of Rocks cultural landscape has been assessed as fair. Although individual features or elements associated with the landscape may be in good, fair, or poor condition, the majority of the landscape and its features are in fair condition. The inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristics will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

The extant trail ruts through City of Rocks have persisted despite fluctuating climactic conditions, erosion, and human uses since the period of significance. However, natural weathering and erosion over time have contributed significantly to impacts seen along the trail corridor and stabilization measures are necessary to preserve these features. The historic setting of the California Trail is moderately impacted by changes in vegetation composition and additional features from subsequent land uses. Finally, the majority of the remaining emigrants' inscriptions are disintegrating through the effects of natural weathering, which is exacerbated by a combination of other impacts from inappropriate visitor use and livestock grazing.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/30/1998

Stabilization Measures:

Stabilization measures for the reserve pertain to publicly owned land. While the National Park Service and Idaho State Parks does not have legal and enforceable rights over privately owned lands within the reserve, the CLI does recommend that the managing agencies dialogue and share these recommended treatments with the landowners in order to stabilize the historic resources for the long-term preservation of the California Trail.

Historic Setting

To stabilize the historic setting, selectively remove invasive vegetation, including plants, woody shrubs and trees where appropriate. Thinning or controlled fire could be used to remove vegetation, especially on the Twin Sisters apron to prevent further successional shifts in vegetation composition from mixed scrub and sagebrush/grasslands to juniper.

Better screening of visitor facilities or potential removal of visitor facilities within the California Trail viewshed would assist in the long-term preservation of the historic scene.

Trail Ruts

Stabilize trail ruts through the following recommendations:

- 1) Develop an archeological management plan to manage California Trail ruts. In areas where erosion is a problem, contact an archaeologist for stabilization procedures on a case by case basis.
- 2) Remove large woody plants, such as sagebrush and juniper, on and adjacent to the trail ruts to stabilize soil and minimize erosion.
- 3) Work with ranchers to prevent or minimize livestock use and travel by horses and motor vehicles directly on and near the trail ruts.

Emigrant Inscriptions

The following discussion on recommendations on stabilization and treatment has been adapted from James W. Henderson's 2001 Documentation of Historic Inscriptions at City of Rocks National Reserve (11):

The most appropriate method of preservation is accurate field photography of the remaining inscriptions. All will someday disappear, but their value in historical research necessitates a priority on photography of all such sites as soon as possible. Make no attempts to physically inhibit the disintegration of inscriptions from weathering effects. Reduce the incidence of post emigration graffiti (spray paint, scratching), climbing on inscription-bearing rocks, camping near these sites, and livestock grazing directly adjacent to the inscription bearing rocks. Interpretation and educational programs may help prevent future impacts.

Other Features

A new general management plan will be developed for City of Rocks National Reserve in the near future. In the event that the new general management plan determines that additional features will be managed as cultural resources (such as features associated with homesteading), stabilization measures for the non-contributing, but compatible features will be developed.

Impacts

Type of Impact:	Erosion
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	The soil composition within City of Rocks is highly erodible. Water erosion is evident where ruts have been deepened by seasonal and intermittent gullies. Wind erosion has resulted in a general flattening of trail rut features. Erosion is exacerbated by contemporary human uses, such as travel by horses, motor vehicles, and livestock grazing.
Type of Impact:	Vegetation/Invasive Plants

External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Vegetation changes include an increase in invasive plant populations and growth of woody species where they were not historically found. Non-native species were introduced during the homesteading eras. Some of these plants are invasive and displace native vegetation that was present during the period of significance. Successional shifts have modified the historic scene, though the character of the vegetation communities is still largely intact. This is most notable on the Twin Sister’s apron.
Type of Impact:	Visitation
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Visitor uses, specifically rock climbing and spray painting on and near emigrant inscriptions, has resulted in obvious and detectable impacts. Impacts include exfoliation of inscriptions and black and red spray painted graffiti.
Type of Impact:	Exposure To Elements
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Emigrant inscriptions have been exposed to natural weathering for one hundred and fifty years. The granite surfaces have naturally exfoliated from seasonal precipitation including torrential downpours, hail, and snow, and constant cycles of moisture saturation and drying from intense sun exposure. Henderson also states, “There are further problems from orange and black colored lichens growing on the granite surfaces. In some cases they have grown over inscriptions, rendering them totally illegible. In addition, barn swallow nests directly above sites on Camp Rock and Monkey’s Head allow droppings to accumulate over inscriptions beneath them. Mud from these nests has also accumulated over inscriptions on Pagoda, Elephant’s Head, and Kaiser’s Helmet” (Henderson 1998, 16-18).
Type of Impact:	Other
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Livestock use and its associated practices and features have resulted in impacts to the historic scene, California Trail ruts, and emigrant inscriptions. Grazing has altered the historic vegetative communities and composition. Livestock grazing has increased the incidence of natural weathering and erosion of the historic

trail ruts by denuding protective vegetative ground cover. Livestock travel and associated horse and motor vehicle traffic along the trail ruts has deepened the ruts in some areas while trampling and widening them in others. Grazing cattle in the vicinity of the inscription rocks have also rubbed the inscriptions over the decades, removing inscriptions and exacerbating the natural exfoliation of the granitic rock.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Preservation

Approved Treatment Document: Development Concept Plan

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

The 1994 Development Concept Plan/Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement indicated that future management objectives would include the identification, inventory, evaluation, protection and preservation of resources related to the California Trail. Specifically, these objectives included “safeguarding the route, remnants, and relics of the trail,” protection of rock inscriptions from further deterioration and the preservation of “pristine scenic vistas seen by the emigrants along the California Trail” (14).

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Supplemental Information

Title: Correspondence from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office regarding City of Rocks National Register documentation submitted by Janene Caywood, 1999.

MEMO:

To: Suzi
From: Bert *MB*
Re: City of Rocks NHL documentation
Date: 2/1/99

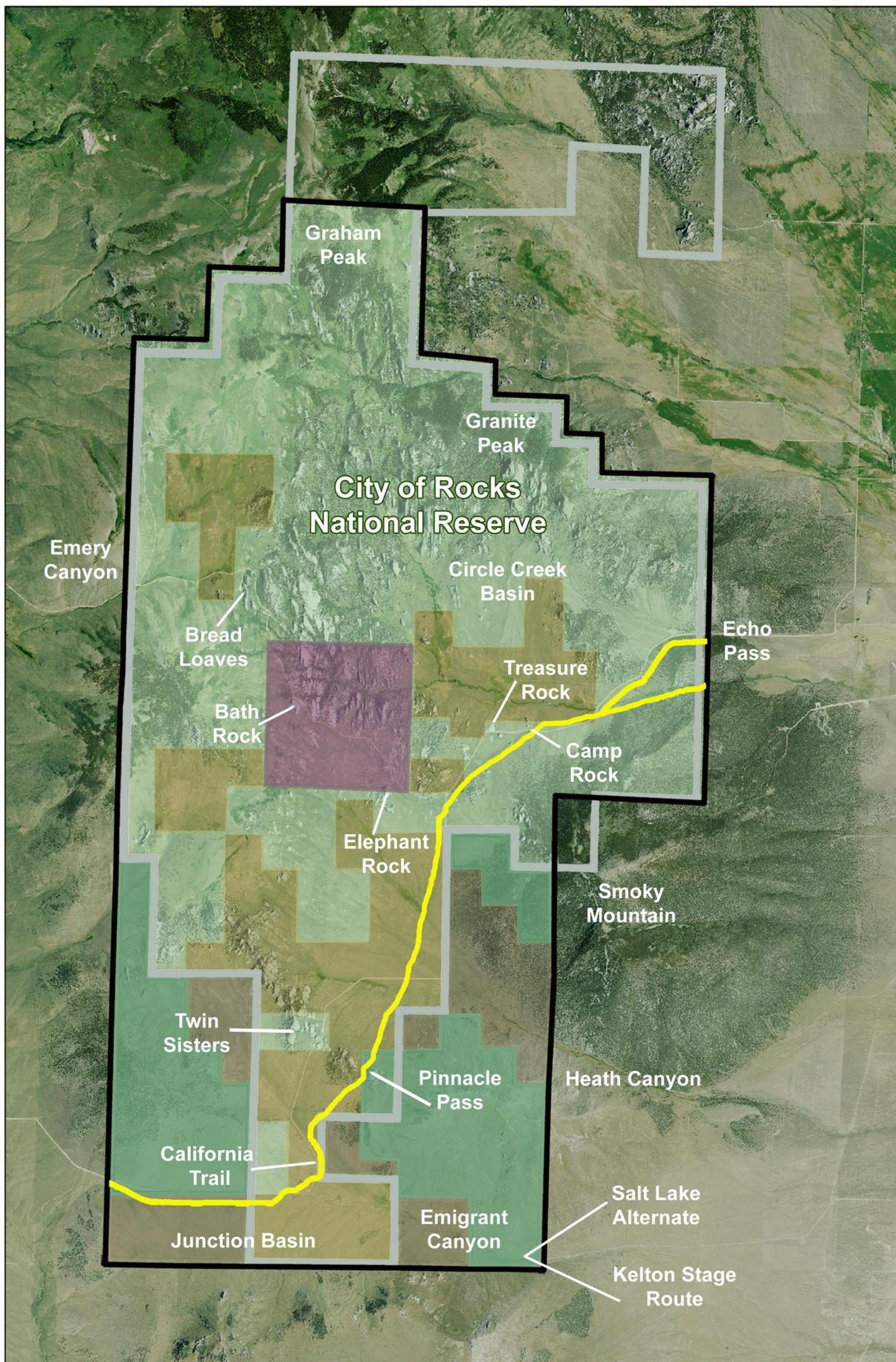
After much delay, I have managed to crank out a memo regarding my concerns with the current draft of the NHL documentation for City of Rocks. You and Larry have already noted specific corrections you would like in the text. My primary concern rests with the scope of the significance statement. There is no doubt that City of Rocks is nationally significant for its association with the Oregon and California Trails and western emigration in the 19th Century. I do not believe, however, that the subsequent agricultural landscape, within the boundaries of the Landmark reserve, has either the integrity or the stand alone significance to be listed in the National Register--let alone achieve the national significance required for an NHL.

With regard to significance: the nomination consistently relies on geographical features, cultural resources and associated community history located outside the reserve boundary to inform its significance discussion. The resources within the reserve boundary are completely dependent on other properties outside the reserve to demonstrate their importance--ie. as part of a much larger late 19th and early 20th century vernacular agricultural landscape. It is not possible to sever the land within the reserve boundary from these other properties and maintain their significance. A full landscape analysis of the entire resource (inside and outside) with appropriate boundaries including all significant resources is the only legitimate way to make the case for the significance of the post emigration agricultural landscape.

This argument is compounded by the relatively low level of integrity remaining for the properties within the reserve boundary. Very few actual structures survive. The dominant characteristic of these sites is simple land division/usage evidence and a few scattered archaeological remains. It should be noted that no discussion of archaeological significance was undertaken. As such we are left with Criterion A considerations. None of the properties discussed in the nomination retain sufficient physical integrity to convey any individual agricultural significance under Criterion A. As such we return to having to rely on properties outside the established Landmark boundaries to make the case for landscape integrity.

In light of this, my recommendation would be to drop this element from the NHL documentation. These comments do not mean that the information compiled is not useful or worthwhile. Indeed these properties may, in future, be proven to contribute to an much larger eligible agricultural landscape. Nor is this to imply that this information cannot be used for interpretive and cultural resource management purposes. It merely does not belong in a National Landmark nomination with these particular boundaries.

Please buzz if you have any questions. -B-



- Reserve boundary/Cultural landscape boundary
- NHL boundary
- NPS owned property within NHL
- NPS owned property outside NHL
- Idaho State property managed by NPS within NHL
- Private property within NHL (not inventoried)
- Private property outside NHL (not inventoried)



City of Rocks Site Plan
Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2008