

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

WARNING

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DESCRIBING LOCATION.

Property Name Agate Springs Ranch
State NEBRASKA
County Sioux
Reference Number 12001126

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument/Agate Fossil Hills Historic and Archeological District

Sioux, NE

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
N/A

Section number Page

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 12001126

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument/Agate Fossil Hills Historic and Archeological District

County: Sioux State: NE

Multiple Name: N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for *Scott M. Mangels* 10/30/13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

The Table of Resources for the Harold J. Cook Homestead NRHP nomination in Section 7 and on page 31 should remove the five sites identified as Barn A, Barn B, Museum Shack, Storm Cellar, and PrivySite. The Cook Homestead nomination has been amended (2013) to remove these five non extant resources. The sites were included as part of the Harold J. Cook Homestead nomination because their presence was known through the historical record. However, professional archeological investigations regarding these sites is limited and no subsurface testing has been conducted. At the request of the Park, these resources should be added to the list of non-contributing archeological sites in Section 7 page 32. Insufficient information exists to evaluate these resources, though future archeological research activities at these sites may lead to such an evaluation.

Two of the gravesites in the nomination identified as Ed Woman's Dress Baby site and the grave site of Dorothy and Grayson Meade are evaluated as non-contributing sites to the nomination (Section 7 page 32). Ed Woman's Dress Baby site has been discussed in the historical record, but its location is not known. Without physical evidence of the site and its location it is recommended non-contributing to the district nomination. The gravesite of Dorothy and Grayson Meade is identified as non-contributing because it dates well outside the period of significance of the nomination. The gravesite of John Cook (James Cook's brother) is identified as a contributing resource because it falls within the period of significance for the nomination. Guidance from National Register and National Park Service staff recommended the status of these grave sites within this nomination.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Agate Springs Ranch
other names/site number Agate Fossil Hills Historic and Archeological District / Agate Fossil Beds National Monument (preferred name)

2. Location

street & number 301 River Road

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

city or town Harrison
state Nebraska code NE county Sioux code 165 zip code 69346-2764

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide ___ local

Adrienne M. Mott Deputy FPO September 10, 2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
National Park Service
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Michael J. ... 04-08-2013
Signature of commenting official Date

Director/SHPO, Nebraska State Historical Society
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Erin K. Mansueti 10/30/13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
18	13	buildings
69	6	sites
18	2	structures
		objects
95	21	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

8

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure, camp

AGRICULTURE: storage facility, animal facility, irrigation facility

LANDSCAPE: natural feature, forest

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, secondary structure

AGRICULTURE: storage facility, animal facility

LANDSCAPE: natural feature

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum, outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS: vernacular

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone, concrete, wood

walls: Wood, stone, metal

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

roof: Wood, asbestos

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Narrative Description

Section 7: Narrative Description

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is located in the northwestern Nebraska panhandle about 40 miles north of Scottsbluff and 20 miles south of Harrison, Nebraska. The district encompasses the entire land area contained in the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. The district and park total 3,055 acres, composed of one principal unit that focuses on the Niobrara River and a second, much smaller, discontinuous unit known as the Stenomylus Quarry, located about one mile east of the main district. The main unit is four miles long from east to west, and from one to two miles wide (north to south). The Niobrara River, at an elevation averaging 4,400 feet above sea level, forms the low backbone that meanders from west to east through the center of the district. Short- and mixed-grass prairie grasses are the dominant historic vegetation throughout the district. In the last 125 years, clusters of trees have been planted at four locations along or not far from the Niobrara to provide cool shade and wind breaks around human habitations. Rising roughly 300 feet above the valley are a series of prominent knolls, ridgetops, and buttes that parallel the river and create a visual U-shaped trough. Adjoining the park on the west end is a privately owned parcel, totaling roughly 432 acres (James Cook's Agate Springs Ranch). Another privately owned parcel at the northeast corner of the district totals 467 acres; its use and appearance are governed by scenic easements. The district occupies part of sections 3-10 and 12 in Township 28 North, Range 55 West of the 6th Principal Meridian.

This historic and archeological district includes land formerly part of the Agate Springs Ranch owned by James Cook. The boundaries of the site do not coincide with the boundaries of the ranch as those boundaries were ephemeral throughout the years of operation and changed regularly to accommodate cattle, crops, the fossil hills, and water sources. The ever changing ranch boundaries do not reflect the significant activity at the fossil hills, but the built environment associated with the ranch remains and contributes to the historic district. The preferred name of this district is the Agate Springs National Monument.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

This district is geographically unified by the Niobrara River, which meanders through its entire mid-section, and by a series of prominent knolls, ridges, and buttes that project high above the river and enclose the district along the north and south boundaries. These high ridges and buttes, extending east and west at the periphery of the district, create and contain a U-shaped trough. This unique combination of natural features has drawn humans (and prehistoric animals before them) here, and in turn, their activities and associations with this place in nature have created this distinctive historic district. The boundaries of the district encompass the paleontological sites of national importance at the twin fossil hills, as well as the *Daemonelix* site and the *Stenomylus* Quarry, the Harold Cook homestead claim cabin/encampment for paleontological field crews (known as the Bone Cabin, and previously listed in the NRHP in 1977), and Agate Springs Ranch headquarters. The Agate Springs Ranch served as the homestead for the James Cook family, as well as a gathering place for multitudes of different people coming from around the world to conduct field work at the fossil quarries, and to visit the Cook family. The ranch headquarters also served as a gathering place for Lakota and Cheyenne Indians, who visited James Cook annually between the late 1880s and 1942. The Niobrara River links the Agate Springs Ranch with the Bone Cabin and the fossil quarries there; the high ridges paralleling the river visually contain this significant historic district. Open unobstructed views between the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, the Bone Cabin and the nearby fossil quarries further connect these important features.

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument includes in its boundaries a wide variety of resource types scattered throughout the district. Distributed along or near the Niobrara Valley floor and on several knolls and ridgetops that parallel the river are multiple National Register eligible archeological sites related to the ethnic heritage of prehistoric as well as historic Native American occupants of the area. This includes the various annual campsites of Red Cloud (1821—1909) and his band who came to visit James Cook (1857—1942) at the Agate Springs Ranch up until Cook's death in 1942. These campsites are located near the Niobrara River in and around the Agate Springs Ranch, at the west end of the district. Although the location of the campsites often changed depending on weather and soil conditions and ranching activities, historic photos suggest that campsites were typically not far from the Niobrara and at the periphery of the shaded core of the ranch headquarters. Sites, structures, and buildings related to significant paleontological discoveries on the sides of three prominent hills—University Hill, Carnegie Hill, and Amherst Hill (Stenomylus Quarry Unit)—are in or near the southeastern section of the district.¹ Finally, numerous buildings, sites, structures, and objects are associated with the history of ranching along the Niobrara in western Nebraska, and are clustered together at the Agate Springs Ranch at the western end of the district.

¹ Stenomylus Quarry was historically known as "Amherst Hill," which is not the same as "Amherst Point," just north of University Hill. Miller, Susanne J. "The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument Stenomylus Quarry: Historical and Scientific Overview, Resource Management Plan and Collections Data Base." Draft. April 2005, 6-8; Barnum Brown, "A Miocene Camel Bed-Ground," *Natural History* 29 (1929), 658-62.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Integrity

The integrity of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument has remained largely intact since the end of the period of significance. The natural features of this historic district include the Niobrara River, the U-shaped trough-like valley, and the terraces, buttes and ridge-tops that contain the valley. These features all remain intact and distinctive on the landscape despite some erosion on the buttes and ridge tops. Other natural features including the paleontological excavation sites at Carnegie Hill, University Hill, Amherst Hill and the *Daemonelix* quarries also retain their integrity from the historic period. Scarring evident at these sites represents the scientific excavations that took place during the historic period. Historic standing structures at the Agate Springs Ranch, the Bone Cabin, and the Hoffman Ranch also retain a high degree of historic integrity. Despite the evolution of these sites and their continuous use, the buildings, their surroundings, and settings have minimal modern intrusions. Additionally, historically significant views within the district are protected from alteration; the district viewshed is protected by 432 acres of scenic easements.

Non-historic features introduced on the landscape are primarily related to developing the park for visitors and transportation systems including trails. Throughout the district the abandonment of grazing has changed the vegetative makeup of the land. Early historic bison grazing and cattle grazing along with the haying (alfalfa and native grasses) along the Niobrara are generally no longer present within the park boundaries. Transportation-related features, such as roads and trails, have also been altered in places since the establishment of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in 1965, whose dual mission combines both preserving features and providing for public visitation. Highway 29 has been paved and, in 2007, a new culvert type bridge replaced a timber trestle bridge across the Niobrara River near the park entrance. Likewise, River Road has been repaved and improved between Highway 29 and the park visitor center. Short roads and parking lots at the *Daemonelix* Quarry and at the park visitor center at the east end of the district are new additions since the early 1990s and non-contributing features. In 2006, the paved trail leading to the Carnegie and University Hills fossil quarries from the visitor center was widened and realigned so as to create a lower grade for greater wheelchair access. Finally, the presence of the National Park Service (NPS) has a visible impact on the landscape, primarily at the east end of the district. Here, the construction of a new visitor center, maintenance facility, and park housing in the early and mid-1990s has created two clusters of non-contributing building ensembles visible on the open prairie grass from the west.

Overall the Agate Fossil Hills Historic and Archeological District retains a high degree of historic integrity present through its landscape and standing structures. The open terrain and unique topographical features provide the visitor an experience similar to what many throughout the historic period experienced. A strong sense of place, historic significance, and scientific value remains present today.

Agate Springs Ranch

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Name of Property

Sioux County, NE

County and State

The Agate Springs Ranch headquarters is located on private property at the west end of the district, adjacent to Nebraska State Highway 29 on the east. The headquarters is on level ground around 4,400 feet in elevation, just south of the meandering Niobrara River. Buildings dating from late 1870s to the 1940s include the ranch house, bunkhouse, sleeping tent house, kiddies cabin, two small buildings serving as post offices at different periods, John Cook's claim cabin, Harold Cook's metal garage, a privy, icehouse, stone greenhouse, coal cellar, several storage sheds and cattle sheds, and the ruins of a historic spring house and chicken house. The arrangement of the outbuildings near the ranch house is loosely linear, extending southward from the rear of the house. Nearly all the buildings, structures, and sites at the headquarters are shaded by a large grove of predominantly cottonwood trees planted by James Cook over 100 years ago. Prior to this massive planting and watering effort, this site had no trees. The ranch retains approximately 41 buildings, sites, structures, and objects with 7 of those features identified as non-contributing. A site map of the Agate Springs Ranch identifying contributing and non-contributing features is located at the end of the nomination. The site map depicts the features of the ranch including items that may not be part of the resource count based on guidance in *National Register Bulletin How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form*.

In addition to buildings, the ranch headquarters also includes important sites and structures. East and south of the ranch house is the elongated, oblong-shaped lawn, known by Cook descendants as the "square," encircled by cottonwood trees and a single-lane roadway. A crescent-shaped pond is west and irrigation ditches are south of the ranch house. The site of the pre-1900 Fort Laramie-to-Fort Robinson Road, which was possibly used to drive ranch cattle fifteen miles north to the train depot in Andrews was a transportation corridor extending north and south from the corral area of the ranch headquarters. The picnic area for Cook Museum visitors, beginning in the 1910s, existed in a grove of cottonwoods just east of the later post office.

The headquarters buildings stand in two clusters: one at the northern section, occupied and used predominantly by the ranch inhabitants, and another cluster at the southern end of the headquarters composed of cattle sheds, corrals, and other ranching-related buildings and structures. A tight concentration of shade trees separates and forms a visual screen between the open un-shaded ranching cluster of buildings and features and the northern human-inhabited section of headquarters. The landscape elements in the southern portion of the ranch headquarters are organized in a functional arrangement associated with the animals and equipment that dominate this portion of the ranch. The buildings that house livestock are clustered together at the northwestern corner of the corrals. Sheds used for storing tractors and other heavy equipment are located closer to the ranch road, where there is easy access to the storage area. Storage facilities for hay, feed, firewood, building materials, and equipment are located in level areas closer to the ranch road. All together, the buildings, structures, and sites at the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters present a collection of buildings and sites designed for human habitation, ranching activities of all kinds, transportation, social interaction, and recreation and aesthetic enjoyment.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Most of the buildings at the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters are wood-frame, one-story (except the two-story ranch house), with gable or shed roofs sheathed with composition shingles, and resting on full stone or stone and wood post and pier foundations. Windows are predominantly wood, multi-pane, fixed casement or double-hung sash. Stone, obtained locally, was used to construct four outbuildings—the greenhouse, coal cellar, spring house (ruins), and chicken house (ruins)—possibly all constructed by the same craftsman in the 1890s. The kiddies cabin, constructed by Erwin Barbour around 1918 for his four grand-daughters, is the only log building at the ranch headquarters. Metal sheathing, not wood, has been used on the walls of a half-dozen buildings, most notably Harold Cook's metal garage south of the ranch house and John Cook's claim cabin near the later Agate post office (presently alongside Nebraska State Highway 29). Several buildings, or partial buildings, were moved to their present location before 1942. These include: the ice house to the rear of the ranch house, moved in the 1910s from Fort Robinson; John Cook's claim cabin, moved from one of Cook's claim sites, probably about three miles east of Agate; kiddies cabin, moved about 200 feet from the north side of the early Agate post office building (now called "Bath Biffy") to the north side of the ranch house; and possibly the early post office, moved from a site north of the ranch house near the Niobrara River bank (and believed to have been periodically occupied in the late 1880s and 1890s by John Cook) to the east side of the ranch house along the oblong-shaped ranch road. Homesteaders and ranchers often salvaged and recycled building materials, parts, and entire buildings, since many materials (like milled lumber and windows) were costly. Building materials could be shipped by train to Andrews (fifteen miles north of Agate Springs Ranch), beginning in the mid-1880s but the cost, time, and patience required to obtain them encouraged recycling.

The ranch house is the dominant building on the site. The house was constructed from some of the materials from a large barn on the site. Cook realized he had mistakenly built the barn on low ground too close to the Niobrara River, so he decided to disassemble the building and use some of its lumber to construct the house. It is a large two story wood frame building with a shallow hipped roof and a full-width projecting front porch. There was also a back porch that was enclosed early on in the history of the home. The house was built between 1892 and 1893. The house was large for its time in the area, and had very simple lines with minimal ornamentation. Fenestration was evenly spaced throughout and consisted of simple one-over-one panes. The house was nicely decorated after the Cooks traveled to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (World's Fair) and bought a significant amount of their furnishings. Cook traveled to Omaha to purchase some of the lumber and trim and bought plaster from the Black Hills in South Dakota.² Soon after the ranch house was constructed a large ell was completed extending from the back or south side of the house. This extension was a simple one-story gable roof construction that utilized several of the storerooms from the disassembled barn mentioned earlier. The Cooks hung a large dinner bell that was struck by hand near the rear of the house. Cook also

²Evans-Hatch, Gayle. *Centureis Along the Upper Niobrara*, p. 154

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

had the house wired for electricity after he saw the exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair even though electrical service was not available in the area.

By 1904 a portion of the front porch of the house was enclosed to accommodate Harold's den and by 1921 the remainder of the porch was enclosed. Cook continued to modify and add to the ranch incorporating a stone spring house and greenhouse, new corrals and cattle sheds. The buildings were generally small in scale and constructed of similar materials providing a pleasing continuity to the built environment that was further connected by the landscape and plantings. A small gable roofed frame building was moved to a site near the road where in the early 1900s it became the Agate Post office until the mid-1910's. Around 1914 another small gable roofed building was constructed much farther east and along present Highway 29 to be used as the new Agate Post office. The old post office building still stands just east of the ranch house and was called the Bath Biffy after it was converted to a bath house in the 1990s.

The tall narrow ice house on the site was moved from Fort Robinson in the late 1890s when the Tenth Calvary was moved to the Philippines and no longer had a use for the structure. The ice house is located behind the one-story ell of the main house and the existing stone coal cellar. The ice house was much larger than the Cooks needed and it was only used in the coldest part of the winter when meat would freeze and then be sawed into pieces.³

Around the same time (late 1890s), John Cook's (James' brother) small gable-roof claim cabin, which was built on his claim approximately three miles east of the ranch and covered with stamped metal, was moved to the ranch and sited just north of the new post office building, near the drive. John served as postmaster for a time and a small store owner.⁴ Also around the turn-of-the twentieth century a blacksmith shed, a hipped-roof tent sleeping house, a kiddies cabin built by Erwin Barbour (Harold Cook's father-in-law), and temporary tipis were added to the collection of buildings between the ranch house and the post office near the road.

Several hundred feet south of the ranch house stood the bunkhouse, which was most likely built around 1888-1890, and a nearby foreman's house dating from the early 1900's. Later, these two buildings were joined during a remodel in the 1990s. South of this, and at the southern end of the ranch, are the southern irrigation ditch and several three-sided cattle sheds, which open onto feedlots and corrals and are enclosed by a vertical board fence.

Sites and structures scattered across the ranch landscape are numerous. Water features include a pond and irrigation ditches, engineered by James Cook in the late 1800s, as well as the meandering Niobrara defining the northern edge of the ranch headquarters. A former entrance road to the ranch with a narrow historic stone and earth bridge extending

³ Ibid, p. 156

⁴ Ibid.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

across the Niobrara, with a semi-circular culvert, once delivered ranch visitors to the east side of the house. Here an elongated oval-shaped roadway links the ranch house to the livestock corrals and sheds several hundred yards south of the house.

A large 100-year-old grove of cottonwood and willow trees shade nearly the entire ranch headquarters. The mature cottonwood and willow trees at the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters provide shade and spatially define the northern portion of the headquarters area. Their arrangement in double rows along the oblong headquarters loop road defines the circulation route as well as the edge of the lawn encircled by the loop, known by Cook descendants as the "square." Another row of cottonwoods extends along the east side of the ranch house. Willows and cottonwoods line the irrigation ditches and the pond located to the west and south of the ranch house. The trees also encircle an abandoned garden southeast of the ranch house. Remnants of treelines are present in the area between the irrigation ditch and the outbuildings near Nebraska State Highway 29. These appear to have lined a former road or driveway and another expanse of lawn. Many of the cottonwood trees have lived well past their 100-year life expectancy. A few trees have been planted in recent years around the ranch headquarters where historic trees have been lost. These provide continuity to the landscape. James Cook spent the time and took the effort to hand water his grove in the late 1880s and early 1890s, because young cottonwoods demand adequate water until they become well established. At a couple of other locations in the district, juniper and cedar have been used as the shade and wind break of choice, since they require less initial care.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument Site

A planted grove of cottonwood trees along the Niobrara River, about one-half mile east of Nebraska State Highway 29, exists as probable testimony of homesteading in the early 1900s, around the time of the 1904 passage of the Kinkaid Act, which encouraged the arrival of additional homesteaders in semi-arid western Nebraska. No trees existed along this stretch of Niobrara River before the arrival of the first homesteaders, as is apparent in the very earliest photos of the Graham/Cook ranch headquarters to the west of this site. Cottonwood trees were a favored tree species among ranchers, since they grew relatively quickly (with adequate water when young), provided abundant shade and a wind break, and required little care once established. Since they need adequate water to survive, cottonwoods thrive along rivers and irrigation ditches. Their presence often suggests the one-time existence of a homestead or ranch headquarters, long after buildings or structures have vanished from the landscape. This grove of trees along the Niobrara may have been associated with the Kelley homestead now an archeological site.

The Hoffman Ranch House, built in 1951-1952, is a rectangular, one-story, wood-frame dwelling, sheathed with horizontal board siding. Built into a small hill, it rests on a concrete block foundation wall that encloses a basement above ground on the east side. A two-bay concrete garage, believed to date from the early 1950s, is attached to the northeast corner of the house. The house has double-hung sash windows. Both the house and garage are capped by a hip

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

roof clad in wood shakes. A stone retaining wall projects from the foundation wall at the east rear corner of the house and creates level ground at the rear of the house for a lawn. A well house of unknown vintage is embedded in an embankment about 40 feet away from the house. The Hoffman Ranch House is sheltered from the wind by a row of evergreen trees planted in a 180-degree arc on the west and north sides of the ranch property. Three cottonwoods stand on the southeast side of the house.

Finally, the importance of water in the ranching history of this region is evident by the presence of another constructed landscape feature. In the northeastern section of the district which is privately owned, the hundred-year-old Harris-Neece Canal diverts water from the Niobrara River and carries it several miles to the east and outside the district. Harris and Neece are the last names of the early homesteaders who initially dug this canal.

Science (paleontology)

The twin peaks Carnegie Hill and University Hill are just a few hundred yards apart and rise to an elevation of about 4600 feet. The twin peaks, located in the southeastern section of the district, are among the series of prominent knolls, high ridges, and buttes that form a rim enclosing the valley floor on both the north and south sides. The formations of these hills are easily identified in the broader monument landscape, and their appearance in the distance signifies a connection between the physical landscape and the human activities that occurred historically. The alteration of these hills during paleontological investigations created land forms that are closely identified with the activities that occurred. Large quantities of materials were removed from the sites, primarily during the period of significance for the science theme of this nomination, the mid-1880s to 1925. Therefore, the alterations to the landscape have left a visual reminder of the discoveries and research that occurred here. The hills can be seen from most of the western portion of the district. A new wider handicapped-accessible trail that winds from the visitor center to Carnegie Hill (before continuing to University Hill), with a lower grade than the narrower more direct one it replaced, was largely completed in 2006. Interpretive signs and benches are positioned along the trail near the fossil excavation sites.

Amherst Hill (known as the *Stenomylus* Quarry Unit of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument) is a discontinuous 60-acre rectangular unit of the district, located about one and one-half miles east of the other fossil quarries at Carnegie Hill and University Hill. A trail/rough ranch road that follows the floor of an ephemeral stream crosses private land and links the main district and Amherst Hill. Amherst Hill is one of a series of projecting shoulders on a ridgeline rising to above 4,600 feet elevation, trending northwest-southeast. The west side of the hill was the site of paleontological excavations in the early 1900s; the cuts into the hillside are still evident in 2007. Interpretation is very limited since there are few visitors.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

The *Daemonelix* site, a third locale in the district of fossil remains, is notable for its distinct landforms and exposed fossilized burrows of the “devil’s corkscrews,” or *Daemonelix*. Millions of years ago, the small, five-inch tall *Palaeocastor* created spiraling beaver burrows resembling corkscrews, which are now exposed on the sides of small hillsides in the northwestern section of the district. A single *Daemonelix* burrow and a split, double *Daemonelix* burrow are encased and interpreted along a winding path. Remnants of other fossilized material in the hillsides are also exposed and visible from this trail. This *Daemonelix* site also includes an ancient sand dune formation, originating millions of years ago during the Miocene epoch. This dune formation of sandstone consisting of fine volcanic particles transported by wind from the west, is said to be one of the oldest land forms exposed by eroding forces of the Niobrara River in this area.

The Harold Cook Homestead Cabin/Bone Cabin (25SX290/ SX00-28 NRHP listed 1977) was built in 1911 and is located west of Carnegie and University Hills and is directly associated with twenty-five years of fossil excavations there. It is a one-story, wood-frame building with a shallow gable roof over the central portion and shallow gables capping two smaller additions. A shed roof porch, partially enclosed, extends across the main façade on the east. All portions are sheathed with composition rolled roofing. Exterior walls are wood, both vertical board and batten and horizontal flush boards. The windows vary in size and are predominantly multi-pane, louvered or fixed sash. The entire structure now rests on a concrete and stone foundation. Several historic landscape features are within close proximity of the cabin. The fencelines and fence materials date from several different periods, but represent the wood post and barbed wire enclosure that has been historically associated with the cabin since its arrival at the site. The windmill, built in 1942, stands in the same location as the original homestead windmill.

The sites of several outbuildings associated with fossil excavations are included in the existing National Register nomination for the Bone cabin and they include: American Museum of Natural History shack (museum shack), east of the cabin; storm cellar, southeast of the cabin; larger barn (barn A), southeast of the cabin; privy, southeast of the cabin; and smaller barn (barn B), southwest of the cabin. These five sites were not extant at the time the nomination was written in 1977 and then amended in 1985. These buildings were known because of documentation through the historical record, however, no surface remains are present to identify the sites or their precise locations. The 1985 nomination recognizes that by about 1950 these five resources were no longer extant. These sites do not currently provide any potential to yield information under Criterion D, and as such the existing Bone cabin nomination will be amended to recognize that these sites do not contribute to the site.

Because there are no longer any surface remains of these sites, and no sub-surface archeological testing is planned for these locations, they are not recommended as contributing resources to this district, and amendment forms to the 1985 nomination will be prepared to remove them from the resource count of the nomination. However, future archeological

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Name of Property

efforts such as ground penetrating radar or subsurface testing may identify features that could contribute to the historic archeology of the site. The existing nomination also identifies the stock tank that was added in the 1950s as a noncontributing resource because of its date of construction. This nomination recommends the stock tank as a contributing feature because it has reached the 50 year age recommendation and contributes to the function of the Bone Cabin as a ranch and homestead property. Currently the Bone Cabin nomination will be amended to add the stock tank as a contributing resource and to remove the barn a, barn b, museum shack, storm cellar, and privy sites from the documentation. Finally, the corridor of the road connecting the Cook Homestead Cabin and the fossil quarries, which are clearly visible to the southeast and an important element of the viewshed, is still evident (although altered somewhat by more recent use and improvement).⁵ The Cook Homestead Cabin complex of a building, structures, and sites encompasses about five acres.

Red Cloud Campsites

Historic photographs have shown that there were three separate camp locations to the north, south, and east of the Agate Springs Ranch house in three different years. The 1891 campsite of Red Cloud was situated north of the Niobrara River and the ranch headquarters. The 1898 campsite was located in open or semi-shaded grassy fields to the southeast of the ranch house and in the vicinity of the corral and associated outbuildings for cattle and horses. The 1914 campsite of Red Cloud's descendants stood east of the ranch headquarters, and is now partially under State Highway 29, non-existent before 1922.⁶ The 1914 site appears to be the site of repeated occupation by Red Cloud's descendants. It is identified as site No. 25SX459 by the Nebraska SHPO.

Historic photos (principally in the Cook Papers at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument) and also textual references indicate that Red Cloud and his band, as well as those Native Americans who continued to come to the ranch after Red Cloud's death, camped at several different locations in and around the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters. The campsites appear to have been within reach of the Niobrara River and often at or just outside the shaded periphery of the ranch headquarters, to allow and encourage social interaction between the two groups. Additionally, those Native Americans who continued to come and camp every year at the ranch erected teepees for Harold and Eleanor Cook's children on the ranch house lawn. Red Cloud and his band and those who followed after Red Cloud's death occupied and used not just their campsite, but much of the ranch headquarters area. The entire ranch headquarters landscape is associated with Red Cloud's and subsequent leaders' visits and encampments. There is little extant cultural evidence of these ephemeral transitory campsites. In 2003, the Nebraska SHPO concurred with a NPS determination that the 1914 Red Cloud

⁵ Sanford, Dena. William S. Harlow, and Charles Trupia, *Historic Structures Report: Cook Homestead Cabin, HS-1, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Agate, Nebraska*, DRAFT, (Omaha: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 2004).

⁶ Meade, Gretchen. Interview with the author, 10 June 2007, transcript, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

campsite, encompassing roughly ten acres just to the east of the actual campsite (and partially covered by Highway 29), was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.⁷

Archeology

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is located within the upper Niobrara River basin of Sioux County in northwestern Nebraska. The archeological resources included within the boundaries of this district include rock cairns, lithic scatters, lithic rock quarries, rockshelters and historic artifact scatters. The period of significance begins during the Paleoindian period and ends with the historic use of the District by the Cook family and by researchers conducting paleontological research. In general, the integrity of the archeological sites included within this district is low to moderate.

This District is located on the High Plains of Nebraska. Generally speaking, the High Plains extend from the Pine Ridge near the Nebraska-South Dakota border to the Rio Grande. The environment of the District is defined by the upper Niobrara River, which begins in Wyoming and flows through Nebraska, draining into the Missouri River at Nebraska's eastern edge. As it flows through this archeological district, the Niobrara is relatively small, and in many places is only a few meters wide. The Niobrara River valley floor is at 4390 feet above sea level and the surrounding hills and escarpments rise to a maximum of 4600 feet above sea level. Upper Harrison Formation rock frequently outcrops along the escarpments. Flanked by low terraces, the bottomland along the river is typically one-quarter mile wide to one-half mile wide. Narrow upland ridges that trend generally northwest-southeast are present above the terraces. Low quality chert, referred to as Moss Agate, is present within the rocky outcrops that flank the river valley.⁸

According to John R. Bozell (2004), the area of this archeological district "is a spectacular example of High Plains mixed grass prairie."⁹ Precipitation is low within this area, and the climate is semi-arid to sub-humid. Largely restricted to the Niobrara River bottomland, trees include hackberry, willow, plum, and cherry. The Cook family planted cottonwood trees near the Agate Springs Ranch. Grass species within the District consist of a mixed grass and short grass prairie species. Wildlife is plentiful within the region and includes deer and pronghorn antelope, as well as prairie dogs, raptors, waterfowl, coyote, fox, raccoon, turtle and fish¹⁰. Buffalo and elk once ranged well into this area.

Evidence suggests that people may have been utilizing this area as early as 10,200 years ago, and this use extends well into the last century. These dates are based upon artifact assemblages, the written record and communication through oral histories. The area was likely utilized by Native American people, beginning with paleoindian and extending up to use by

⁷ *Red Cloud Campsite, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, Revised 2003* (Omaha, NE: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 2003).

⁸ Bozell, John R., *An Archeological Overview and Assessment of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Sioux County, Nebraska*. Prepared for the National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2004.

⁹ Bozell, 7.

¹⁰ Bozell, 7.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Native Americans during the historic period. Euroamerican presence in the area began with fur trading activities in the early 19th century. Agate Springs Ranch, also included within this nomination, was established in 1879. Generally speaking, these conclusions are drawn from regional research completed by Frison (1991), as well as specific research conducted by Clark (1993), Wandsnider and MacDonell (1997) and Bozell (2004).

Though professional archeological investigations began within the boundaries of this nomination in 1966, the Cook family were keen observers and were well placed to identify and appreciate the archeological landscape just outside their front door. The "Cook Collection" contains numerous stone tools collected from the area.

Professional archeological investigations have been consistently and systematically completed within the boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. Bozell indicates that virtually the entire Monument has been subjected to systematic surface reconnaissance activities.¹¹ Reconnaissance surveys were completed by Moore (1966), Anderson (1973), and Hunt (1990). These surveys laid the groundwork for intensive surveys by Kay (1975), and Nickel (2002), and for intensive survey and testing by Olinger (1976), Clark (1993, 1994) and Wandnsider and MacDonell (1997).

The overwhelming majority of archeological sites identified within the boundaries of this archeological district consist of lithic debitage scatters. Forty-two of these scatters are included within this nomination and most of the lithic scatters are recorded based on chipped stone flakes or stone tools observed on the ground surface. Clark observed that within the boundaries of this historic district, the archeological landscape appears to be almost continuous.¹² This observation was reiterated by Wandsnider and MacDonell.¹³ Though only a small portion of sites have been test excavated, the potential for subsurface cultural material certainly remains at numerous sites located upon terraces. In addition, fourteen rock cairns have been identified, as well as two rockshelters, seven quarry sites, and eight sites that are historic in nature. A brief description of each site is included below. These descriptions are drawn in large part from summaries completed by Bozell¹⁴ and upon Nebraska Site Survey forms.¹⁵

Lithic Debitage Scatters

25SX152 is a large site that covers approximately 20,000 square feet and is located at the base of a long slope leading up to University and Carnegie Hills. The site is at 4400 - 4410 feet in elevation and consists of a dense scatter of lithic debitage in at least two spatial clusters. Test excavations suggest that this site is deflated and has been disturbed by

¹¹ Bozell, 37 -38.

¹² Clark, Caven, Archeological Survey and Testing at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Sioux County, Nebraska. Technical Report No. 22. National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln. 1993.

¹³ Wandsnider, LuAnn and George H. MacDonell, eds., Agate Fossil Bed Prehistoric Landscapes, 1994-1995. On file, National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln. 1997.

¹⁴ Bozell, 2004.

¹⁵ On file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

natural processes. Most of the cultural material recovered through excavation was within the upper 10 - 30 centimeters below the ground surface. One Cody/Eden point, and two late prehistoric projectile points were recovered through investigations at this site.

A large site, 25SX153 encompasses over 84,000 square meters. This site was first identified by Marvin Kay in 1975 and is described as a cluster of seven stone circles identified as tipi rings and a scatter of lithic debitage, a ceramic sherd and several bone fragments. Kay suggested that the ceramic sherd may be associated with the Dismal River phase. Kay was unable to definitively associate the scatter of artifacts with the stone circles, a conclusion that was supported by Clark upon his reevaluation in 1991. The tipi rings are located at the base of an escarpment north of the River Road, and the scatter of artifacts is located south of the River Road on the Niobrara River floodplain. Bone fragments observed in an arroyo wash are believed to be bison bone. Please note that the site originally recorded as site 25SX688 has been added to site 25SX153. Additional evaluation of these two sites suggests one large site rather than two separate sites.

Site 25SX157 is located near the entrance to the Monument, and covers about 100,500 square meters. First recorded by Kay (1975), site testing was completed by Clark in 1992. Test excavations at this site included individual test units and trenches. A variety of materials were discovered, including stone tools, animal bone and lithic debitage. A late Paleoindian projectile point and five late prehistoric projectile points are part of this assemblage. Please note that site 25SX472, originally recorded as a separate lithic scatter north of River Road, has been added to site 25SX157 to make one large site. Additional evaluation of these two sites suggests one large site rather than two separate sites.

Located on a terrace north of the Niobrara River, site 25SX163 was initially recorded by Kay in 1975 and is a large scatter of lithic debitage encompassing 100,000 square meters. The Visitor Center and Museum development is located within the boundaries of this site. Surface collections and test excavations yielded several stone tools, projectile point fragments and two ceramic rimsherds. These diagnostic artifacts indicate Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric occupation of this broad terrace. In 1991, Clark recorded site 25SX481 on the north side of River Road and indicated that he believed 25SX481 was contiguous with site 25SX163. In the ensuing years, investigators at the Midwest Archeological Center have determined that Clark's assessment is correct, and these two sites have been combined into 25SX163 for administrative purposes.¹⁶ The northern portion of this site (formerly 25SX481) encompasses nearly 80,000 square meters and extends up the slope and to the base of a prominent bluff. The scatter of lithic debitage in this area is large, but it is also light. Stone tools were noted, and one Early Archaic projectile point was collected. Test units on this side of River Road yielded a sparse and shallow cultural deposition.

¹⁶ Personal communication, Anne Vawser, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln. March 28, 2012.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Site 25SX192 was recorded by Clark in 1993 and covers about 2,000 square meters. The site is located on an upland slope northwest of the major fossil quarries and consists of a dense scatter of lithic debitage mixed with fossils from paleontological quarrying operations. No diagnostic materials were observed. The site was recorded again in 1994-95 and was assigned 25SX258.

Located on a broad ridge in the southwestern portion of the Monument, 25SX251 is a thin scatter of lithic debitage covering approximately 2,500 square meters. A McKean projectile point made of tan and white White River Group Silicate material was found on the ground surface of this site. This Middle Archaic projectile point dates to 5,000 - 2,500 years before present (LAW after Frison). Sources for this lithic material are found throughout South Dakota, northeast Colorado, southeastern Wyoming and the southern panhandle of Nebraska. The nearest quarry source for this material to Agate is 55 - 65 miles away (MacDonnell and Wandsnider 1997). Three test units were excavated at this site in 1995, but no subsurface cultural material was discovered.

A light scatter of lithic debitage, 25SX252 is located on the Niobrara River floodplain in the central portion of the Monument. The site encompasses 500 square meters at 4400 feet in elevation. No diagnostic materials were observed.

Site 25SX253 was recorded and tested by Wandsnider and her University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) crew in 1994-95. The site is located at 4400 feet in elevation and is situated on a lower terrace. Encompassing 1,000 square meters, the site consists of a lithic scatter on the ground surface, as subsurface lithic debitage. The densest buried material is located between 50 and 60 centimeters below the ground surface. A Late Archaic or Plains Woodland projectile point was recovered at this site.

Situated at an elevation of 4460 feet, 25SX254 consists of a small scatter of lithic debitage. The site covers approximately 1,500 square meters on top of a prominent knoll above the Niobrara valley. This site has not been tested, and it has not been assigned a temporal classification.

Site 25SX256 is a small lithic scatter encompassing 50 square meters at 4410 feet in elevation. Located in the central portion of the Monument, the site is positioned on the lip of a terrace on the south edge of the Niobrara River valley.

A larger site, 25SX257 is a lithic scatter that covers 3,500 square meters in the central portion of the Monument. The site is situated on a low terrace at 4400 feet in elevation. No diagnostic materials were observed on the ground surface.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Site 25SX259 consists of a light scatter of lithic debitage on a sloping terrace south of the Niobrara valley. The site covers 5,000 square meters and is located between 4420 and 4480 feet in elevation. No diagnostic materials were observed.

A light scatter of non-diagnostic lithic debitage, 25SX260 covers about 1,000 square meters. The site is located on the slope of a prominent knoll in the south central area of the Monument. This site has not been tested, and it has not been assigned a temporal classification.

Located on a gentle slope south of the Niobrara River, site 25SX261 is a light scatter of lithic debitage covering about 3,000 square meters.

Covering only 1 square meter, site 25SX262 consists of ten chipped stone flakes on a low, level Niobrara River terrace in the eastern portion of the Monument.

Located on a narrow ridge overlooking the Niobrara valley, 25SX263 is at 4470 to 4480 feet in elevation. The site covers about 400 square meters and consists of a light scatter of lithic debitage. No diagnostic material was observed.

Site 25SX264 is a light scatter of lithic debitage spread across 2,000 square meters. The site is located on a low, level Niobrara River terrace. No diagnostic material was observed.

Located adjacent to an ephemeral drainage near the Niobrara River, site 25SX265 consists of a light scatter of lithic debitage covering about 500 square meters.

Situated above an ephemeral drainage on a west-facing slope, site 25SX266 is a light scatter of lithic debitage encompassing about 500 square meters.

Site 25SX267 consists of a light scatter of lithic debitage and is positioned on the leading edge of a narrow ridge overlooking the Niobrara valley in the central area of the Monument. At 4440 to 4460 feet, this site covers approximately 1,000 square meters, and is located just north of 25SX263. No diagnostic material was observed at this site.

25SX268 is a scatter of lithic debitage located in the south central area of the Monument, immediately above the Niobrara River. The site encompasses nearly 4,000 square meters. Test units excavated by UNL in 1995 revealed buried

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

stone flakes and stone tools between 30 and 50 centimeters below the ground surface. No diagnostic material was recovered.

Located on a gentle slope or terrace at 4420 feet in elevation, site 25SX271 consists of a sparse scatter of lithic debitage consisting of chipped stone flakes and nondiagnostic stone tools. The site covers 3,000 square meters at 4420 feet in elevation.

Site 25SX272 is a scatter of lithic debitage located on what appears to be a second terrace of the Niobrara River at 4420 to 4430 feet in elevation. The site covers approximately 1,500 square meters, but no diagnostic material was observed.

On a narrow ridge at 4500 to 4520 feet in elevation, 25SX273 covers an area of approximately 2,500 square feet. Several non-diagnostic tools, as well as lithic debitage were observed at this site. 25SX159, a rock cairn site, and two light lithic scatters, 25SX263 and 25SX267, are all located along this narrow ridge.

Site 25SX274 is a scatter of lithic debitage located on a low terrace south of the Niobrara River. The site encompasses 3,500 square meters and includes stone flakes and non-diagnostic stone tools.

Situated on a terrace above the Niobrara River at 4420 feet in elevation, site 25SX286 consists of a scatter of lithic debitage and a non-diagnostic stone tool. The site covers about 1,250 square meters and is located in the south central area of the Monument.

Site 25SX469 was identified by Clark in 1991 and consists of several flakes and a Late Archaic projectile point. The site covers 20 square meters and is at 4400 feet in elevation. Clark excavated one test unit at this site, but did not discover buried subsurface material in that test unit.

Located immediately north of the River Road at the contact point between the Niobrara River floodplain and a slope, site 25SX471 consists of lithic debitage and non-diagnostic stone tools. Subsurface testing at this site did not reveal buried cultural material.

Site 25SX475 is located in the central portion of the park, along and north of the River Road. The site extends up the slope of a prominent bluff and ranges in elevation from 4400 to 4480 feet. Covering 10,000 square meters, test excavations revealed lithic debitage and bone from 20 - 40 centimeters below the ground surface. A Late Archaic or Plains Woodland projectile point was recovered from one of the test units.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

Site 25SX486 is a scatter of lithic debitage located on the valley floor near the western entrance to the Monument and immediately north of River Road. First recorded by Clark in 1991, this site encompasses approximately 6,000 square meters. Test excavations revealed a buried hearth which contained charcoal, animal bone and lithic debitage. This hearth was completely excavated in 1992. Radiocarbon analysis of charred material yielded a calibrated date of AD 1640 indicating a Late Prehistoric occupation.¹⁷

Identified in 1991, site 25SX487 is located at the confluence of the Niobrara River and an ephemeral stream. The site encompasses about 3,000 square meters and is located at 4400 feet in elevation. Test excavations revealed a buried cultural deposit 45 to 60 centimeters below the ground surface. This buried layer contained fire-cracked rock, lithic debitage, stone tools and bone, as well as the base of a projectile point.

Located near the western entrance to the monument, site 25SX488 is a light scatter of lithic debitage covering approximately 15,000 square meters. This site is located at 4420 to 4440 feet in elevation and is on the slopes north of River Road.

Site 25SX489 consists largely of lithic debitage which is similar to that found at several nearby quarries. The site encompasses approximately 200 square meters and is located near the crest of a small butte overlooking the Niobrara River valley near the western edge of the Monument. The elevation of this site is 4480 feet.

Site 25SX492 is a scatter of lithic debitage which Clark believed to be a flintknapping location. The site is located just up the ridge from site 25SX491 and is at 4500 to 4540 feet in elevation. The site encompasses approximately 1,600 square meters.

Site 25SX499 is located in the central area of the Monument and was discovered eroding out of the bank of the Niobrara River. Recorded by Clark in 1991, he noted several flakes and a projectile point in the bank at about one meter below the ground surface. The projectile point is a Late Archaic or Plains Woodland style.

Site 25SX676 is a diffuse scatter of lithic flakes as well as groundstone located within the housing area of the National Monument at 4475 feet in elevation. The site encompasses 330 square meters of local agate lithic material.

Located along side the well used Daemonelix trail, site 25SX683 is a small site encompassing only 100 square meters at 4425 feet in elevation. Two large flakes of Hartville Uplift chert and numerous retouch flakes were found on the trail. Additional flakes of Hartville Uplift and one moss agate flake was observed off the trail.

¹⁷ Beta Analytic, 1994

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Recorded in 2004, site 25SX684 consists of groundstone and flakes positioned on bedrock at 4528 feet in elevation. Located near the trail to the Daemonelix interpretive display case, the site covers 900 square meters.

Site 25SX687 is a lithic scatter located slightly down off a ridge at 4406 feet in elevation. The site covers 3,000 square meters and stone flakes were fashioned of several lithic materials, including Hartville Uplift chert, Moss Agate, red jasper, a brownish yellow flake and 3 quartzite flakes.

Site 25SX689 is located near the Niobrara River in the west central area of the Monument. Cultural material is exposed in the nearby cutbank of the Niobrara River. At 4420 feet in elevation, this site encompasses 34,000 square meters and is located near the Red Cloud (25SX459) site. A dark line in the cutbank from 25-45 cm below the ground surface contains bone fragments and at 50 cm below surface, flakes and numerous bone fragments are present. The bone is highly degraded and is in loose soil below where it has fallen. The dark line is nearly continuous in the cutbank for 12 meters. Several other darker soil horizons are present, but these do not appear to contain cultural materials.

A large diffuse scatter of lithic debitage, site 25SX690 is located approximately 15 meters from State Highway 29. Flakes observed on the ground surface are fashioned primarily of the locally available Moss Agate, however, Hartville Uplift chert and Table Mountain chert were also noted. Charcoal and bone were also observed on the ground surface. This site is more than 50 meters south of the Red Cloud Campsite (25SX459) and is spatially separate from that site.

Cairn Sites

Composed of five large rock cairns, 25SX2 is located near the eastern margin of the park at the summit of Carnegie Hill. Also known as the Serenity Site, and located at nearly 4600 feet in elevation, these rock cairns are on one of the highest points within the boundaries of the National Monument. It is generally understood that Harold Cook built one of the cairns during a land survey around 1912. Local ranchers claim to have built the other cairns while playing as children. Lakota stories tell of prehistoric origins. Cairn 1 is a dirt filled rock cairn, roughly circular and 2 m across. Cairn 2 consists of a roughly rectangular group of exposed rocks trending N/S and measuring 1.2 x 0.7 m. A red/green triangular shaped biface or tip was found on the northeastern part of the mesa top near Cairn 3. One side of this biface exhibits patina, and the edges of the biface are sharp. The biface is made of Hartville Uplift chert and was collected from the surface. Cairns 4 and 5 are the southernmost cairn features. They consist of a more recent circle (20 rocks) that is 0.7 m across. It is on top of an older soil filled feature which trends N/S, is rectangular, and measures 2 m x 1.2 m. A soil

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

sample from Cairn 5 was sent for geochronological dating with Stafford Laboratories. That sample yielded a soil age of approximately 600 years¹⁸.

Identified by Marvin Kay, 25SX154 is a rock cairn located in the northeastern portion of the Monument. Situated on a small, but prominent knoll at approximately 4500 feet in elevation, the cairn is made of local bedrock materials. The cairn is 2.1 meters to 2.4 meters in diameter (7 - 8 feet) and 46 cm to 61 cm (18 - 24 inches) high. This cairn is not associated with a specific time period or cultural complex.

Located in the north central portion of the Monument at approximately 4500 feet in elevation, 25SX155 was identified by Kay and is described as two stone cairns. Placed once again on a prominent knoll, one cairn is about 1.5 meters (5 feet) in diameter and the second cairn is approximately .61 meters (2 feet) high. No temporal range has been assigned to these features. UNL recorded one of these features as 25SX294.

Situated in the rolling uplands away from the Niobrara River, 25SX156 is a low earth and rock mound in the northwestern portion of the Monument. The mound is elliptical in shape and is approximately 4.6 meters x 3.7 meters (15 feet x 12 feet) and is about 46 cm (18 inches) high. The only mound feature recorded within the boundaries of the Monument, Marvin Kay suggested that this feature could be a human burial. No excavation has been conducted. A small scatter of lithic debitage was noted near the mound.

Originally recorded by Marvin Kay in 1975, 25SX158 consists of two rock cairns approximately 250 meters apart. This site is located at approximately 4600 feet on a long narrow rocky ridge in the southeastern area of the Monument. Revisited during investigations conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in 1994-95, one cairn is 96 centimeters in diameter, 48 centimeters high and is comprised of 29 stones (Volf 1997). The second cairn is 156 centimeters in diameter, 25 centimeters high and also contains 29 stones. While small scatters of lithic debitage were noted nearby, these scatters could not be specifically associated with the cairns. No date has been assigned to this site.

In 1975, Marvin Kay described 25SX159 as a single rock cairn. In 1994-95, UNL investigators identified two additional stone features nearby. Located in the south central area of the Monument along a high narrow ridge south of the Niobrara River Valley, the cairns range in elevation from 4540 feet to 4580 feet. The cairns vary in diameter from 63 centimeters to 227 centimeters and range in height from 9 centimeters to 41 centimeters. The number of individual rocks used to construct the cairns ranges from 6 to 15 to 70 rocks. A small scatter of lithic material near one of the cairns could not be specifically associated with the cairn, and none of the lithic material is temporally diagnostic.

¹⁸ Stafford Laboratories letter to Park Superintendent Ruthann Knudson. On file, Nebraska State Historical Society.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Located on a long narrow ridge in the south central area of the Monument, 25SX161 was recorded by Marvin Kay as an isolated rock cairn. When revisited by UNL in 1994-95, an additional cairn was discovered. These cairns are at about 4540 feet in elevation and are varied in size. One cairn is 48 centimeters in diameter, is 27 centimeters high, and contains five rocks. The second cairn is 138 centimeters in diameter, 35 centimeters high and is comprised of 44 rocks.

Located in the southeastern corner of the Monument, 25SX282 consists of three rock cairns placed on a ridge approximately 4600 feet in elevation. The cairns vary between 93 and 162 centimeters in diameter, and are between 15 and 34 centimeters high. These features have not been assigned to a specific time period.

In 1996, Bob Nickel recorded an isolated rock cairn, 25SX293, on a narrow ridge in the northwestern portion of the Monument. The narrow ridge is at 4520 feet in elevation, and the rock cairn is 30 - 50 centimeters in size and contains about twelve stones.

Recorded by Caven Clark in 1991, 25SX495 is a rock cairn and a sparse lithic scatter located on an eroded bluff at 4520 to 4540 feet in elevation. The site covers about 4,000 square meters on this prominent landscape feature above the Niobrara River Valley.

Site 25SX496 is located in the northwestern portion of the park and is a rock cairn and small scatter of lithic debitage. Located upon another prominent point overlooking the Niobrara River valley, this site is at 4500 feet in elevation.

The small cairn recorded as 25SX678 contains 5 rocks that are intact, and 4 additional rocks that have been displaced. This site is located at 4540 feet in elevation and is about 100 square meters in size.

Site 25SX679 is a rock cairn consisting of more than 20 rocks constructed on a natural platform. Some rocks have fallen away from the cairn. The size of the intact portion of the cairn is 1.5 m by .8 m. The site is located on a ridge that overlooks the Niobrara River valley at 4535 feet in elevation and encompasses approximately 10 square meters.

Site 25SX680 is a cairn made up of 10 large rocks and a few smaller rocks. This structure is still recognizable as a cairn, though several rocks have been displaced. The cairn is located on a south facing point of a ridge at 4525 feet. The site area encompasses 100 square meters.

Quarry Sites

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

A quarry site located at 4500 feet in elevation, 25SX28, is situated along a narrow ridge in the eastern area of the Monument. When recorded in 1991, Clark observed lithic debitage in various stages of reduction, and indicated that a portion of the lithic debitage observed was quarried at or very near this site.

Site 25SX29 is located just west of 25SX28 and is located on the same narrow ridge. Also recorded by Clark in 1991, he identified this site as a quarry site based upon the light scatter of locally available lithic debitage.

A quarry site, 25SX482 is located on the top and on the slopes of a prominent bluff overlooking the Niobrara River valley. The site encompasses about 2,000 square meters at 4480-4520 feet in elevation. Clark interprets this site as a primary quarry used in the procurement of Moss Agate, a locally occurring stone tool material. This interpretation is bolstered by the presence of a dense scatter of lithic debitage in a stage of primary reduction.

Recorded by Clark in 1991 as a quarry and associated lithic workshop, site 25SX490 covers approximately 18,000 square meters. Located in the northwestern area of the Monument, this site is situated in an area of uplands and is at 4480 to 4520 feet in elevation. Clark noted evidence of quarrying as well as initial reduction activities.

Also recorded by Clark in 1991, site 25SX491 is a quarry and primary lithic reduction activity area. The site is located at 4500 to 4540 feet in elevation and encompasses an area of approximately 3,600 square meters on an upland ridge.

Located in the northwestern region of the Monument, Clark identified site 25SX493 as a quarry and associated work area. This site is located in the uplands and is at 4540 to 4560 feet in elevation.

Also located in the uplands in the northwestern region of the Monument, site 25SX494 is a quarry site recorded by Clark in 1991. The site covers approximately 1,600 square meters and is located at 4540 to 4560 feet in elevation.

Rockshelters

Encompassing nearly 20,000 square meters, site 25SX476 is located on the top and south-facing slope above the Niobrara River valley. This site extends across the River Road, and ranges in elevation from 4400 to 4480 feet. A small rockshelter is present at this site, and an adjacent talus slope contains lithic debris. Test excavations at this site revealed cultural deposits from the surface to 60 centimeters below the ground surface. Materials recovered include calcined bone, lithic debitage and stone tools, as well as a late prehistoric projectile point form. A possible hearth feature was also noted.

Site 25SX682 is best described as a rockshelter. Located at 4518 feet in elevation, this site covers approximately 100 square meters and overlooks the Niobrara valley. This west facing rockshelter is located just above 25SX471. It measures

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

4 meters wide by 1.2 meters high. It is 2 meters deep and contains several Moss Agate flakes, white flakes and small bits of bone. The shelter does not appear to be disturbed, though some of the visible flakes and bones could result from secondary deposition due to erosion.

Historic Sites

Located in the south central area of the Monument, site 25SX283 consists of a foundation, a well and a scatter of brick, metal, and glass on a gentle slope at 4440 feet in elevation. Archival research indicates that this site is associated with the Kelley family homestead. The site covers approximately 160 square meters.

Site 25SX284 consists of a small scatter of tin cans, metal strips, glass and a piece of pipe. This site is located on a bench overlooking the Niobrara River valley at 4460 feet in elevation.

Site 25SX288 consists of a scatter of historic material located on the saddle between University Hill and Carnegie Hill fossil quarries. Historic material such as wood, tin cans, glass and concrete were observed to cover 350 square meters at 4540 feet in elevation.

Site 25SX289 is located downslope and to the north of University Hill at 4460 feet in elevation. The site encompasses about 120 square meters and includes tin cans and a wooden plank.

Site 25SX290 is the Harold J. Cook Homestead site, also known as the "Bone Cabin." Though known about for several years, this site was not formally recorded as an archeological site until Bob Nickel did so in 1996. The Harold J. Cook Homestead site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, and the nomination was amended in 1977. No specific mention of an archeological site was mentioned in either the nomination or the amendment, though many features present at the Homestead site can also be categorized as archeological in nature. In addition to the contributing resources already listed in the National Register, there is a separate archeological site consisting of a scatter of early to mid 20th century material, as well as lithic debitage.

Located in the rolling uplands in the northwestern area of the Monument, site 25SX291 consists of a historic period dump recorded by Bob Nickel in 1996. Nickel observed ceramics, glass, wire, and cans that likely date to the early 1900's. This site may be associated with the nearby Agate Springs Ranch. Nickel also observed one non-diagnostic stone tool.

Site 25SX459 has been identified as the Red Cloud Campsite. The campsite is located near the southwestern edge of the Monument. NPS employee Ron Weaver initially reported this site to the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office in

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

1971, and the site was formally recorded in 1986 based on Weaver's observations. Bob Nickel re-evaluated this site in 1996. Located just east of Nebraska Highway 29, this site encompasses approximately 6,000 square meters. The Agate Springs Ranch is just a short distance west of Nebraska Highway 29. This site is one of several that are believed to be associated with visits made by Red Cloud and his followers to the area to visit with the Cook family during the late 1800's and early 1900's. According to Weaver, a concrete post and several mower blades visible at the site were placed there by Harold J. Cook to mark the location of the Red Cloud camps. Charcoal and glass are visible eroding from a shallow deposit. Lithic debitage, pre-dating the Red Cloud camps, was also recorded.

Site 25SX497 is a Euroamerican period dump in the northwestern area of the Monument. The dump is located in a saddle in an upland area and encompasses 2,500 square meters. The artifacts noted all appear to be 20th century in origin and include ceramics, tin cans and glass.

Four archeological sites, 25SX681, 25SX692, 25SX693, and 25SX694 are considered noncontributing sites. A brief description of each noncontributing site is included below.

Noncontributing Archeological Sites

25SX681

Site 25SX681 is described as a rock feature that may be related to a fence. Large rocks are positioned about three meters apart, until meeting a large natural rock mound. The site encompasses approximately 500 square meters at 4562 feet in elevation. This site is recommended as noncontributing because no clear prehistoric or historic association can be made at this time.

25SX692

Site 25SX692, also known as the Buckley Potato Cellar, consists of resources related to agricultural production of potatoes in the 1930's. As recorded in 2004, the site includes resources located within and outside the National Monument boundaries. A field formerly used to grow potatoes is located the boundaries, while a potato cellar used to store potatoes and a shed are located outside the National Monument boundaries. The potato cellar has collapsed and has been partially filled with debris. The agricultural field has been allowed to revert back to a more natural state. Associated irrigation ditches are no longer visible. This property lacks sufficient integrity to convey its' significance and is a noncontributing site.

25SX693

A pond associated with historic use as a reservoir for an oil company, site 25SX693 is considered noncontributing to this nomination. An oil company operated south of the current National Monument boundaries in the early 1900's and used

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

this pond in their operations. The oil company itself was located outside the current Monument boundaries and is no longer extant. The pond is a remnant of this operation and does not convey historical significance associated with the oil industry.

25SX694

Site 25SX694 is the site of a gravel quarry utilized by the county for road fill until the 1960's. This site is considered a noncontributing site to this nomination because this site does not add to our overall understanding of ranching, paleontology, prehistoric or historic archeology within the boundaries of this historic district nomination.

Physical integrity of the contributing archeological sites and structures is variable throughout this historic district. Not surprisingly, sites that are located in upland settings are largely eroded, affecting their overall integrity. Limited test excavations of lithic scatters located upon terraces have revealed some buried cultural material including at least one feature, a buried hearth. The integrity of the cairn sites is generally good. The integrity of the historic sites included within this nomination is generally good.

National Park Service Facilities

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument Visitor Center, built in 1992-1993 and located south of River Road near the eastern end of the district, is a two-story rectangular shaped building with a small two-story projection on the north side. The roof is a medium-pitch gable with four projecting gable-roof dormers all clad with composition shingles. Exterior walls are sheathed with horizontal unpainted wood siding. The windows are relatively small (in relation to the entire surface of each wall) and primarily fixed pane. The building stands on a concrete foundation. Landscaping around the Visitor Center includes several sites and structures: a paved parking lot and entrance road, a screened utilities area, a picnic area, a flag pole, a tepee site, and scattered evergreen trees and shrubs. In 1979, fourteen years before completion of this Visitor Center, fifty-one cottonwood, ponderosa pine, and Rocky Mountain juniper trees were planted around the former visitor center (a trailer) and the Hoffman House (now a ranger residence), some of which still remain today.

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument park housing and the maintenance area are accessed by a short paved road south of River Road near the eastern boundary of the district. The maintenance area on the east side of this road is dominated by a long, single-story, rectangular vehicle storage building with several bays. This maintenance building, once located in the area of the Visitor Center, was moved to its present location in 1992-1993. Two wells were dug nearby at that time. A wall encircles a paved maintenance yard. A row of dumpsters lines the south wall of the enclosed maintenance yard. The park housing (341, 343, 345, and 347 River Road) is south of the maintenance area on the west side of the access road. Four dwellings, built in 1993-1994, are spaced about 100 feet apart. The buildings share a similar design and materials. Each one is one-story, wood-frame, irregular in shape with a medium-pitch gable roof clad

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

with asbestos shingles. A two-car garage is attached. The building stands on a concrete slab. Landscaping around and between each residence building consists predominantly of native prairie grass, with a small area alongside the foundation set aside for exotic perennial plants. Both the maintenance area and the four park houses are clearly visible for miles across the open unobstructed prairie.

The district includes several modern non-historic roads and parking areas, most of which have been created since the establishment of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in 1965. A small paved parking lot completed in the 1990s is at the base of the *Daemonelix* site, and a trailhead is located near the major western entrance to Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. At the park's visitor center, three miles to the east of the park's main entrance, a curvilinear paved access road leads to a sizeable modern parking lot just to the east of the visitor center (both building and lot completed in 1992—1993). A third curvilinear paved road one-eighth of a mile further to the east of the visitor center provides vehicle access to a park maintenance facility (created in 1992—1993) with a sizeable parking area enclosed by a brick, wood, and artificial wood wall and four park houses, each with its own driveway and garage (1993—1994).

Contributing Resources - Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Resource	Type of Resource
Ranch House	Building
Ice House	Building
Coal Cellar	Building
Root Cellar	Building
Harold Cook's Metal Garage	Building
Kiddie's Cabin	Building
Greenhouse	Building
Early U.S. Post Office	Building
Later U.S. Post Office	Building
Tent Sleeping House	Building
Storage Shed (Cook Museum storage)	Building
Storage Shed Addition	Building

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

Small Shed	Building
John Cook's Claim Cabin	Building
Shed	Building
Bunkhouse	Building
Barn/Shed	Building
Hoffman Ranch House and attached Garage	Building
Grove of trees / vegetation lines	Site
Picnic Area for visitors	Site
Lawn and Gardens	Site
Grove of trees / vegetation lines	Site
Cottonwood Grove along Niobrara River	Site
Windbreak of trees at Hoffman	Site
Bridge over Niobrara to the Ranch	Structure
Irrigation Ditches	Structure
Well House at Hoffman	Structure
Harris-Neece Canal	Structure
Paleontology Excavation Quarry, Carnegie Hill	Site
Paleontology Excavation Quarry, University Hill	Site
Amherst Hill (<i>Stenomylus</i> Unit)	Site
<i>Daemonelix</i> Fossil Quarry 1	Site
<i>Daemonelix</i> Fossil Quarry 2	Site
Gravesite of John Cook	Site

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

Contributing Resources - Archeological Sites

Resource	Type of Resource	Resource	Type of Resource
25SX2	Structure	25SX265	Site
25SX154	Structure	25SX266	Site
25SX155	Structure	25SX267	Site
25SX156	Structure	25SX268	Site
25SX158	Structure	25SX271	Site
25SX159	Structure	25SX272	Site
25SX161	Structure	25SX273	Site
25SX282	Structure	25SX274	Site
25SX293	Structure	25SX284	Site
25SX495	Structure	25SX283	Site
25SX496	Structure	25SX288	Site
25SX678	Structure	25SX289	Site
25SX679	Structure	25SX290	Site
25SX680	Structure	25SX291	Site
25SX28	Site	25SX459	Site
25SX29	Site	25SX475	Site
25SX152	Site	25SX476	Site

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

25SX153	Site	25SX482	Site
25SX157	Site	25SX486	Site
25SX163	Site	25SX487	Site
25SX192	Site	25SX489	Site
25SX251	Site	25SX490	Site
25SX252	Site	25SX491	Site
25SX253	Site	25SX492	Site
25SX254	Site	25SX493	Site
25SX255	Site	25SX494	Site
25SX256	Site	25SX497	Site
25SX257	Site	25SX499	Site
25SX259	Site	25SX676	Site
25SX260	Site	25SX682	Site
25SX261	Site	25SX683	Site
25SX262	Site	25SX684	Site
25SX263	Site	25SX687	Site
25SX264	Site	25SX689	Site
25SX469	Site	25SX690	Site
25SX488	Site		

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

***Resources Previously Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
 Harold J. Cook Homestead NRHP (1971, amended 1977). NeHBS SX0028***

Resource	Type of Resource
Bone Cabin	Building
Windmill	Structure
Fenceline	Structure
Barn A (not extant)	Site
Barn B (not extant)	Site
Museum Shack (not extant)	Site
Storm Cellar (non extant)	Site
Privy site (not extant)	Site

Noncontributing Resources - Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Resource	Type of Resource
Garage with bunkhouse	Building
Shed (at corral)	Building
Shed (at corral)	Building
Shed (along Niobrara)	Building
Shed (near irrigation ditch)	Building
Shed (near irrigation ditch)	Building

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

Vehicle storage building (in corral area)	Building
Visitor Center (1992-1993)	Building
Park House	Building
Maintenance Building	Building
Nebraska State Highway 29	Structure
River Road	Structure
Gravesite of Ed Woman's Dress Baby	Site
Gravesite of Dorothy & Grayson Meade	Site

Noncontributing Resources - Archeological Sites

Resource	Type of Resource
25SX681	Site
25SX692	Site
25SX693	Site
25SX694	Site

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

1

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE: ranching

ARCHEOLOGY: prehistoric, historic aboriginal, historic non-aboriginal

SCIENCE: paleontology

Period of Significance

8,000 BP to 1965

Significant Dates

1887 Cooks acquire ranch

1892 Ranch House completed

c. 1900 Major paleontological excavations begin

1911 Bone Cabin completed

1952 Hoffman House completed

1965 Transfer of property to NPS

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cook, James Henry and Cook, Harold

Cultural Affiliation

Native American (Unknown Prehistoric, Late Proto-historic, Historic – Lakota and Cheyenne

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

N/A

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins at 8,000 BP and continues through 1965. The starting date of the period of significance has been identified through the archeological record by those sites with the earliest evidence of human occupation in the area. The historic period is documented through the early occupation of first generation ranchers including the Cook family. 1965 was chosen as the concluding date for the period of significance because it is the date the National Park Service retained ownership and management of the property. Between the earliest historic occupation and 1965 the Cook family was a constant presence at Agate Springs Ranch and Harold Cook's Bone Cabin. The family was integral in dealing with the National Park Service and always wanted to see a museum, tourist site, and interpretive center at the site to showcase the significant historic Native American collection and paleontological finds. Because this concluding date is so close to the recommended 50-year cut-off date, and because no major construction activity took place after the completion of the Hoffman Ranch in 1952, the property does not need to meet Criteria Consideration G: Properties that have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, as explained in the National Register Bulletin How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Section 8: Statement of Significance

Summary

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument meets National Register Criteria A, B, and D. The district is associated with events and activities that have contributed to the broad historical patterns related to western Nebraska agriculture and ranching in the High Plains, and to the newly burgeoning science of paleontology. James Henry Cook was an early and long-time rancher on the semi-arid upper Niobrara River, and his son Harold Cook remained in the area to pursue his passion in the science of paleontology. This ranch is significant under Criterion A representing early ranching and agriculture on the High Plains at the state level. James Cook manipulated his immediate environment through the extensive use of irrigation on his land to provide a growing atmosphere not native to the region. The Cook Ranch itself and the landscape associated with the ranch represent well executed ranch patterns in the region. The property retains the required structures and buildings needed to sustain a functioning ranch.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

The district is also significant under Criterion A on the national level for its contributions to the newly burgeoning science of paleontology. James Cook discovered and recognized the importance of the fossil remains located on his land, and built long-term relationships with important universities and scientists to excavate, preserve, and research the fossil remains located in the hills. The fossil discoveries are of national importance as they document a period of life during the Miocene Era (immediately following the extinction of dinosaurs) in a concentrated fashion not found elsewhere in the United States.

Both James and Harold Cook are significant on a state level under Criterion B. James established long-term diplomatic relations with area Native Americans through his lifelong friendship with Chief Red Cloud of the Oglala Sioux. He discovered and recognized the importance of the fossil remains located on his land, and he built permanent relationships through his established ranch and regional presence. His son Harold Cook witnessed the accomplishments of the scientists and his father's ability to communicate and establish relationships with the Native Americans, and stayed to establish his own homestead and passionate contributions to paleontology. Harold Cook's homestead cabin is currently listed in the National Register (Harold J. Cook Homestead Cabin/Bone Cabin SX00-28 NRHP listed 1977).

The district is eligible under Criterion D for the likelihood that the existing prehistoric archeological sites as well as the remaining paleontological deposits will yield significant information. These sites are likely to yield information that will expand human understanding of progressive changes on earth before the arrival of humans, of prehistoric human life, and of humans during historic times.

Levels of Significance and Period of Significance

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is being listed at the national level for its significant contributions to the science of paleontology through the Miocene Era deposits in Carnegie and University Hills. The district is also significant at the state level for the contributions of James and Harold Cook, and its association with events significant in the history of western Nebraska ranching. The period of significance of the site begins approximately 8,000 years before present and extends to 1965, the year in which the NPS took over ownership of the district. Archeological evidence suggests the beginning date of the period of significance. The ending date identifies a significant change in management and direction for the land: the shift to NPS ownership. Up to 1965, the Cook family was actively involved in the management of the ranch and the property associated with it, including the fossil hills. They continued to seek a tourism and museum setting for the preservation of the land as well as their collections of Native American artifacts and fossil remains. The 1965 date encompasses the totality of historic building construction and represents a shift in the use and management of the site. Under NPS stewardship the landscape has been protected and retained and modern amenities

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

have been added to display and interpret the Cook Native American collection, a significant collection of Native American artifacts, as well as the significant scientific discoveries found in the hills.

Introduction

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument was studied by NPS landscape architects between 1995 and 2004, and recommended National Register-eligible by the Nebraska SHPO in July 2004.¹⁹ The district is roughly rectangular in shape and geographically unified by the Niobrara River meandering through the mid-section of the area from west to east. The Niobrara provided a water source for early explorers and Native Americans before them as well as a source for irrigation for permanent settlers. A series of prominent knolls, ridges, and buttes project high above the river providing distinctive landmarks to centuries of travelers. These high ridges and buttes, extending east and west at the periphery of the proposed district, create and contain a U-shaped trough. These fluctuations in the landscape have provided emigrants, government scientists, and Native Americans a means of identifying their location for centuries.

The boundaries of the district encompass the paleontological sites of national importance at the twin fossil hills known as University and Carnegie Hills, as well as the *Daemoneelix* site and the *Stenomylus* Quarry. The Harold Cook homestead claim cabin/encampment for paleontological field crews, known by the Cook family as East Agate, is currently listed in the NRHP (1977). These resources are all located within the boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. A significant contributing feature to the property is the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters. The ranch headquarters was the primary residence of James Cook and his family, and served as a gathering place for paleontologists who came from around the world to conduct field work at the fossil quarries. The ranch headquarters also served as a gathering place for Lakota and Cheyenne Indians, who visited James Cook annually between the late 1880s and 1942. The Niobrara River links the Agate Springs Ranch with East Agate and the fossil quarries there; the high ridges paralleling the river visually contain this landscape. The built and natural environments connect the open and unobstructed views punctuated by the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, East Agate and the nearby fossil quarries. The nominated district utilizes the congressionally-designated boundaries of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. It incorporates NPS-owned land as well as NPS-acquired scenic easement/privately owned land.

The scientific importance of the Agate fossil beds provided the primary rationale for the NPS's decision to create a park and to draw the current boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. According to the "Preliminary Study of the Agate Springs Fossil Quarries Area, Nebraska," (April 14, 1961), the Agate Springs Fossil Quarries are a "classic paleontological site well known for their wealth of fossil mammal bones. . . . A tremendous quantity of bones of extinct

¹⁹ "Consensus Determination of Eligibility, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument," 28 July 2004 and Ruthanne Knudson, letter to Lawrence J. Sommer, 20 July 2004, both at Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

mammals of Miocene Age accumulated in a relatively small area here. . . . A remarkable feature of these deposits is the abundance of almost complete skeletons concentrated in a small area. . . . The classical paleontologist, Henry Fairfield Osborn, has been quoted as calling these the most remarkable deposits of mammalian remains of Tertiary Age that have ever been found in any part of the world.”²⁰ The importance of preserving James Cook’s collection of Indian artifacts, displayed at the Cook Museum of Natural History at the ranch headquarters, was also recognized by the NPS at that time. Since the early 1960s, other aspects of significance have also been recognized, most notably an abundance of prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic archeological sites, and the unique Agate Springs Ranch headquarters created by the Cook family that is still intact and retains historic integrity. The boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument were drawn to encompass all significant cultural and natural features that contribute to the historic significance of the site, and that are within the congressionally authorized boundaries of the site.

Visually, the Agate Springs Ranch is connected to the historic paleontological fossil quarries about three miles to the east. Looking east down the Niobrara valley from the ranch headquarters it is possible to see the twin butte tops, Carnegie and University Hills, in which fossil quarries were mainly excavated between 1904 and 1925. Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, with its large grove of cottonwoods, is plainly visible from the fossil quarries and Harold Cook’s homestead cabin at the base of the twin buttes. Euro-American emigrants traveled through western Nebraska along the North Platte River as early as the 1840s and 1850s. This area of northwestern Nebraska which is 50 to 100 miles north of the Platte River received permanent settlers later in western history. The semi-arid climate subject to frequent drought periods and the baked, windswept earth that supported the short- and mixed-grass prairie with no or few trees did not support successful homesteading. Most Euro-American travelers came from the humid east searching for country that would support non-irrigated farming. The first Euro-American settlers did not attempt to establish farms and homes in Sioux County, Nebraska until the mid- and late-1870s. Even then, farming was not a successful enterprise because of the weather and soil conditions. This did not stop aggressive settlement and government intervention. Irrigation was the answer, and the government became involved in the construction of the Inter-State canal system to serve farmers in the area. They employed many of them to serve as day laborers and to provide supplies when needed.

Agate Springs Ranch Criterion A: Agriculture/Ranching

Agate Springs Ranch, comprised of the ranch headquarters, the grazing land acquired by the Cooks over four decades that extends east along the Niobrara River, and the remnants of James Cook’s early irrigation system, is eligible for listing in the National Register for state-wide significance. Elisha Graham, James’ father-in-law, was one of the earliest permanent

²⁰ “Preliminary Study of the Agate Springs Fossil Quarries Area, Nebraska,” April 14, 1961, (p. 2), General Files, 1952, 1963, Record Group 79, Central Plains Region, National Archives and Record Administration, Kansas City. Also see Ron Cockrell, *Bones of Agate: An Administrative History of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Nebraska* (Omaha: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 1986).

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

settlers in this area. He ranched the land which he named The 04 Ranch. James and his wife Katherine, Elisha's daughter, bought this ranch from Elisha and renamed it the Agate Springs Ranch, for the moss agate found in the ledge under the caprock of the north hills and for the nearby springs. The ranch buildings, sites, structures, and associated landscape features are significant as one of the earliest, most innovative, and diversified ranches established in Sioux County. The ranch was also an early user of irrigation to support the landscaping features and cattle grazing efforts. The 1880 census lists it as one of six ranches in the county at that time.²¹

Sioux County, Nebraska saw its earliest European traffic as a result of the California Gold Rush of the 1840s and 1850s. Overland trails traversed nearby, but northwest Nebraska saw no permanent settlement as a result of this traffic. Sioux County was not organized until 1879 as a large territory north of Cheyenne County encompassing almost all of northwest Nebraska. Sioux County's current boundaries were established by 1883 when much of its land area was divided off into neighboring counties. Most of the settlers in the county at this time were ranchers who had been running cattle up the Texas Cattle Trails and virtually all settled near reliable water sources. Cattle ranching remained almost exclusively the trade of choice in Sioux County at this time because soil conditions were not favorable to farming and the terrain did not suit other agricultural pursuits.

As with many areas of the west, the population boom in Sioux County came with the railroads. The Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley railroad arrived in Harrison (about 20 miles north of the Agate Springs Ranch) in 1886 and by 1890 Harrison's population reached 400 people. Federal programs such as the 1904 Kinkaid Act, which provided claims up to 640 acres, also prompted an influx of permanent residents. Population in Sioux County doubled (from 2,055 to 5,599) in the decade between 1900 and 1910 because of this. However, there were problems with the influx of permanent residents wanting to farm. The land in this area of the state is primarily short grass prairie and semi-arid in nature, and is not suitable for farming. The short grass proved beneficial for ranching as it retains nutrients for cattle, resulting in open range ranches becoming the preferred agricultural method. Open range ranching required significantly more land than the 640 acres allowed under the Kinkaid Act. Cattle would generally not stray more than 15 miles per day to forage for food and water. This cattle behavior dictated the setting and arrangement of the built environment for most ranches in the area. Ranches were built around a main water source and ranch land would extend out as much as seven miles in all directions, thus providing the open range. Agate Springs Ranch is a premier, intact example of these ranching tenants. James Cook laid out the ranch for optimal success and diversified his activity thus making the ranch a service provider (with a post office for 75 years and commercial enterprise selling grain), and gathering place for much of the community.

²¹ Louis Berger Group, *Nebraska Historic Building Survey: Sioux County*, August 2005, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

James Cook arrived in the area in the late 1870s and settled here permanently when he bought the 04 Ranch from his father-in-law Elisha Graham in 1887. Cook renamed the ranch the Agate Springs Ranch after the natural resources in the area. Cook settled in the area after driving cattle from Texas to Nebraska. He made his last cattle run in the spring of 1877 when he decided to put his hunting and guiding skills to work as a professional guide for wealthy easterners and Europeans on holiday. During this four year stint, Cook guided not only big-game hunters, but also scientists, paleontologists, and surveyors. Cook ended his career as a guide for big game hunters when several wealthy Englishmen asked Cook to join them in purchasing and managing a large ranch in New Mexico. By this time Cook had amassed a personal wealth of more than \$10,000, and this combined with his vast experience at such a young age provided him a strong foundation to manage the New Mexico ranch. This ranch known as the W.S. Ranch grew to run sixty thousand cattle and became the first large and significant ranch in New Mexico. It was here that Cook realized the value of an irrigation system to sustain ranch operations. He developed a system complete with ditches, concrete diversion dams, and three small reservoirs. He spent four years on the ranch in New Mexico and gained a vast amount of experience and respect among other ranchers. Cook spent much of the decade of the 1870s and early 80s working his ranch in New Mexico.²²

Because of unrest in the west and Native American hostilities in the area, Cook's W.S. Ranch became the headquarters for the Eighth U.S. Cavalry commanded by Major S.S. Sumner who was sent to the area to quell the hostilities, particularly those lead by Geronimo and his band of Apache warriors. Cook spent a year and a half guiding the troops through the southwest as an army scout, eventually leading to Geronimo's capture and imprisonment.

During this time, Cook quite often visited Cheyenne, Wyoming where he met his future bride Katherine Graham. Cook married in 1886 and eventually settled on the acreage he bought from his father-in-law known as the 04 Ranch. The Cooks decided to change the name of the ranch to the Agate Springs Ranch for the moss agate found in the ledge under the caprock of the north hills and for the nearby springs.

Cook came to Agate Springs Ranch with a young family, extensive knowledge of the ranching and agricultural industry, and a strong desire to succeed. He approached ranching with great innovation, adaptability, and resourcefulness. He arrived to an over-grazed, cattle trampled area without grass, which was caused by the great western herds running from Texas. During this early period at the ranch, Cook proceeded to establish and construct requisite buildings. He and his wife and young son Harold lived in a sod house with a frame addition while he built barns and sheds. The current ranch house was constructed in 1892 from the remnants of a barn that was disassembled. After its completion, much of the

²² Evans-Hatch, Gayle. Centuries Along The Upper Niobrara Historic Resource Study: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, prepared for the Midwest Region National Park Service , 2008.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

place was furnished with purchases made by the Cooks during their visit to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago the following year. Cook was so impressed with the technology seen in Chicago that he had his house wired for electricity even though electric power was not yet available in the region.

Many visitors were impressed by the growing Agate Springs ranch. Paleontologist Erwin Barbour of the University of Nebraska visited the ranch in 1891 and raved about its cattle and choicest breeds of horses. Most ranchers in the area focused singularly on raising cattle. Cook diversified by not only raising cattle, but also breeding and raising race horses in the early years of his ranch. After this failed because of the death of his prized horses, he relied on beef cattle for income and also increasingly raised alfalfa for sale locally. His 1890s vintage irrigation system is one of the oldest in the county. It is thought to be the third constructed on the upper Niobrara, after Edgar Beecher Bronson's 33 Ranch and McGinley-Stover's two separate systems. This system enabled Cook to raise water-thirsty alfalfa, which dry-land farmers could not. Cook was among the first ranchers in the area to grow alfalfa under irrigation. His innovative resourceful approach to life on the upper Niobrara enabled him to consider other ways of supplementing his ranching income. He established a U.S. post office on the ranch premises, which his son Harold operated for over fifty years. Cook wrote articles and books about his experiences in the west, and he opened a museum featuring Indian artifacts charging a small entrance fee. Cook's son Harold, unlike many other ranchers, pursued a professional career as a geologist and paleontologist.

One of the reasons James Cook's ranch thrived was because of his enthusiastic adoption of irrigation. He realized the great importance of water to his entire ranching operation, and based on his experience in New Mexico, he developed an early irrigation system to serve his needs. He built his own ditches and acquired those of McGinley-Stover to the west. This system supported his cattle and hay production, but also created a lush green oasis comprised of huge groves of trees, gardens, and lawn at the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters. Rarely in ranching history is so much attention and effort devoted to creating an aesthetically appealing home environment around a ranch headquarters. Cook, however, did not neglect creating a stock environment that functioned well, protected cattle, and facilitated human care of the stock. He is said to have created a somewhat early unique arrangement of three-sided cattle sheds facing onto the main corral. In 1923, Willoughby Walling, a friend and Cook's mortgage holder, in a letter to Cook, observed that "as a cattle proposition, you have an unusual plant which will make money whenever money can be made in the cattle business."²³

Few if any historic ranch headquarters in Sioux County or western Nebraska have such a complete ensemble of extant ranch buildings, structures, and sites that so poignantly reflect the early ranching history of western Nebraska. Outbuildings, often the first to disintegrate or be replaced by modern buildings, survive in great abundance at the Agate

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Springs Ranch and range from a small ice house, privy, and coal cellar to the larger, more substantial ranch house and tent-sleeping house. The large grove of cottonwood trees shading the entire complex, although aged and, in some instances, dying, is an important integral feature of the ranch headquarters ensemble. Although many of these trees were initially planted over a decade in the 1890s, new trees were added over many more years, such as those purchased and planted by Harold Cook in the spring of 1910, about six months before his marriage to Eleanor Barbour.²⁴ Not long after their marriage, the Barbours sent many hardy fruits, vegetables, and flowers from their own yard in Lincoln to Agate Springs Ranch. In March 1918, Erwin Barbour sent a box full of Siberian iris, "Snow Queen" and "Yale Blue" varieties and advised Harold where to plant them. "I wish you would plant them close to the edge of the lake [just west of the house]. . . . They like very rich ground and I think they like rather moist conditions."²⁵ Jack Cook, James Cook's brother, is also said to have planted iris along the edge of the pond. These irises have naturalized downstream along the Niobrara. In 1919, a box of peonies along with walnut and oak tree specimens arrived at the ranch from Barbour.²⁶ Barbour shared his love and samples of flowers with Jack Cook as well. In 1919 he sent the elder Cook, for planting in his small corner of the ranch headquarters, a box containing *Hemerocalis* lilies, an "old-fashioned Live-Forever" variety, the roots of *Helianthus* (a form of single sunflower), and a few vines for the fence at the post office.²⁷ Other plants may have become a permanent feature under the shade of the cottonwoods at the ranch headquarters.

Ranching

Open-range ranching boomed throughout the Great Plains states where plentiful land and few physical barriers provided prime ranching environment. The potential for livestock grazing north of the Niobrara River in northwest Nebraska was capitalized on by a handful of ranchers. Once the word spread that northwestern Nebraska's High Plains were suitable for open-range grazing, Texas ranchers began driving their cattle north to Kansas and, eventually, Nebraska. James Cook, who drove cattle from Texas north between 1874 and 1877, encountered the prairie grazing potential of the upper Niobrara River in northern Sioux County. The extension of railroads into western Nebraska, the continued high demand and market price for beef in eastern markets, and the continued existence of the open, unfenced range led many to believe that riches could be made in the cattle industry. Such euphoric propaganda encouraged the movement of cattle and cattle ranchers into northwestern Nebraska in the late 1870s.²⁸

²³ Willoughby Walling, letter to James H. Cook, 6 November 1923, Box 54, Cook Papers, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.

²⁴ Harold Cook, letter to Erwin Barbour, 3 March 1910; Eleanor Barbour Cook, letter to Erwin Barbour, 21 July 1912; both in Barbour Papers, University of Nebraska Archives.

²⁵ Erwin Barbour, letter to Harold Cook, 26 March 1918, Barbour Papers, University of Nebraska Archives.

²⁶ Erwin Barbour, letter to Harold and Eleanor Cook, 7 April 1919 and 5 May 1919, Barbour Papers.

²⁷ Erwin Barbour, letter to Jack Cook, 7 April 1919, Barbour Papers.

²⁸ Principal sources for this summary history of ranching in western Nebraska include: Louis Berger Group, Inc., *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Sioux County*, prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society (Marion, IA: Berger Group, 2005); Gail Evans-Hatch, *Centuries along the Upper Niobrara: Historic Resources Study, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument* (Omaha: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 2007); Francis Moul, "Prairie Grass Dividing: The Land, Life, and People of Sioux County, Nebraska" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Elisha B. Graham, who began his 04 Ranch operation on the upper Niobrara River in 1879, was among the very first to settle in northern Sioux County. Edgar Beecher Bronson, credited as the first rancher in the county, had arrived and established the Dead Man's Ranch just one year earlier. Charles Coffee, another Sioux County pioneer, arrived around the same time. Federal surveyors did not arrive to chart the topography and cultural features until 1881. Five years later in 1886, John Franklin Cook, James Cook's brother, filed for his first land claim along the Niobrara River. James Cook, one year later, purchased the 04 Ranch from his father-in-law, just after a record cold and blustery winter across the northern Plains had killed free-ranging cattle by the thousands.

For the next fifty years, James Cook and his family operated the Agate Springs Ranch. Their experiences in many ways reflect the larger ranching history of Sioux County and the semi-arid High Plains. Cycles of drought and deadly cold winters, of national and international depressions, and of debt were common for the Cooks and all ranchers struggling to survive on the rural High Plains. In other respects, James Cook's Agate Springs Ranch was quite unique in its operation and in the contributions it made to the ranching history of the region.

James Cook and his son Harold went to great lengths to construct a ranch headquarters that was both functional and visually attractive. Cook realized the critical importance of water to the entire ranch operation. Drawing upon his experience building irrigation ditches on the New Mexico ranch that he had managed, Cook began to develop an irrigation system that took water from the Niobrara River, at two places downstream from the existing McGinley and Stover ditches northwest of the Agate Springs Ranch. The irrigation water flowed across some of the Agate Springs Ranch fields, ending slightly to the east of the ranch headquarters. In 1892, Mary Graham, Cook's mother-in-law who lived at the ranch at that time, filed a claim for an entire quarter section of land traversed by the Niobrara River, just west of the ranch headquarters. Cook probably began to divert water from the river and channel it through his first ditch across Graham's land to the northern part of the ranch headquarters by the early 1890s. In 1895, James Cook purchased nearly all of the quarter section directly west of Mary Graham's, allowing him to construct a second irrigation ditch from the Niobrara that delivered water to the southern part of the ranch.²⁹ Both of his irrigation ditches were probably completed between 1892 and 1896. In December 1898, James Cook purchased much of the land and irrigation system on the McGinley and Stover ranch to the west of Agate Springs Ranch headquarters.³⁰ Within a very few years, another irrigation ditch, the Neece-Harris Canal, began to withdraw water from the Niobrara River about three miles downstream

Nebraska, Lincoln, 1998); Harrison Community Club, *Sioux County History: First 100 Years, 1886-1986* (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corporation, 1986).

²⁹ "Numerical Index," Section 1, Township 28 North, Range 56 West, Clerk's Office, Sioux County Courthouse, Harrison, Nebraska.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

from the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, in Section 3 of Township 28 North, Range 55 West, now partially inside the historic district.³¹

Cook surveyed and constructed the two ditches by using a homemade level to determine the precise route of the ditches so that they descended at the proper rate and overflowed across the desired areas. After each ditch was staked, it was dug about three to four feet deep, gates at the entrance to each ditch were constructed, and flumes were built to carry water across or under any obstacles that interfered with the gradual descent in elevation of the ditch. Laterals (smaller ditches tributary to the two main ones) were also surveyed, staked, and dug. Once the water filled these ditches to the top, they overflowed and flooded the adjoining land below the ditches. Cook's irrigation system extended for about one mile northwest of the ranch house and continued through the ranch headquarters to a point about a quarter mile to the southeast of the corrals.³² By 1910, Cook used and maintained ten miles of irrigation ditches. Nearly 1,000 acres of Cook's land were under flood irrigation.³³

James Cook's flood irrigation system expanded his hay production many times. In 1886, no more than ten tons of hay could be grown on the Cook Ranch.³⁴ The development of the flood irrigation system enabled Cook to harvest more hay and also to grow a wider variety of crops that required water and that otherwise would not have survived the dry, hot, and windy summers and periodic drought years. His system had its first test during the drought in the early 1890s, which drove some ranchers away from the upper Niobrara. "By persistent experimentation [Cook] has demonstrated that a wide range of field products can be successfully grown under irrigation in his region," according to Cook's friend and paleontologist Erwin Barbour in the early 1900s.³⁵ Cook was among the first ranchers in the area to grow alfalfa under irrigation. Alfalfa hay became a staple crop, both for use on the ranch and for sale to other ranchers, especially during the cold winter months when the cattle required rich, nutritious forage. He also grew small grain crops and potatoes under irrigation, often on the former McGinley and Stover irrigated ranchland. Around the ranch house, Cook planted bluegrass and clover on a terrace surrounded by shallow laterals fed by the southern ditch, making it possible for a wide

³⁰ Harold Cook, *Tales of the 04 Ranch* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, c. 1956), 11-12; Dorothy Meade, *Story of Agate Springs Ranch*, (Scottsbluff, NE: Business Farmer Printing, 1990), 16; James Skavdahl, conversation with the author, 19 March 2007, at Agate Springs Ranch and 20 May 2007 (telephone communication).

³¹ Harold Cook, letter to Howard Baker, 5 March 1962, Box 1, File L58, General Files (1952-1963), Record Group 79, Central Plains Region, National Archives and Record Administration, Kansas City.

³² The McGinley Stover irrigated land became known by the Cooks as the "Upper Ranch." The Upper Ranch became a prime section of the ranch for growing potatoes and alfalfa under irrigation. "Our whole ranch operations and economy are based on the irrigated valley sections of this ranch, with its hub and operational center at Agate," Harold Cook later wrote. Cook, letter to Baker, 5 March 1962, Box 1, File L58, General Files (1952-1963), RG 79, CPR, NARA.

³³ Cook, *Tales of 04 Ranch*, 117; Barbour, "James Henry Cook," 481.

³⁴ Harold Cook, letter to Erwin Barbour, 13 December 1906, Barbour Papers, University of Nebraska Archives.

³⁵ Erwin H. Barbour, "James Henry Cook," in *History of Nebraska, Volume III*, edited by Albert Watkins (Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1913), 481.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

lawn to grow.³⁶ In the early 1900s, after Erwin Barbour sent the Cooks some plants and seeds from Lincoln, Cook wrote thanking Barbour for his gift. “We are having a very dry spring in this section of [the] country, but with our irrigation ditches we hope to make the valley of the Niobrara blossom.”³⁷

Cook clearly gave much thought to the overall plan and grand design of the Agate Springs irrigation system and its purpose of creating a tranquil oasis and profitable ranch operation. He was interested in watering not only crops for cattle, but also food for human consumption, and trees for winter wind protection, human comfort, and aesthetic appeal. Both James Cook and his wife Katherine grew up in southern Michigan and knew the delights and relief from summer’s humid heat given by shade trees.

When the Cooks and Grahams arrived at the ranch in September 1887, only one lone willow tree, which gave “no more shade than a knitting needle,” grew on the west side of the slough near the claim house.³⁸ Soon Cook purchased willow trees from a Canadian firm and planted them near the Niobrara and the crescent-shaped dredged oxbow pond near the house. He also planted fruit trees around the ranch (some of which later died for lack of water). By 1889 James Cook and some of his ranch hands had planted dozens of cottonwood trees, uprooted as small saplings from the North Platte River and transported under wet sacks by horse and wagon nearly forty miles to the ranch. All around the ranch complex he planted orderly rows of trees and groves. An 1888 newspaper article describing the Cook ranch noted that several thousand fruit and forest trees had been planted. Many years later, Harold recalled how, as a small child, he watched his father “after he had come in from riding or working in the corrals, dog-tired and weary, carrying buckets of water to each tree, individually, hundreds of them, to keep the seedlings alive and growing until their roots could push down to water.”³⁹ For this reason, Cook often referred to his cottonwoods as his “bucket trees.”⁴⁰

James Cook’s irrigation system ended near the lower south side of the ranch headquarters by design and not accident. When the southernmost irrigation ditch was completed to the ranch headquarters, young trees were planted in a tight row on both sides of the ditch just north of the corrals. This same southern irrigation ditch also probably flooded a vegetable and flower garden, located in a slightly depressed hollow southeast of the new house on the knoll. Potatoes, in particular, were grown in huge quantities at Agate, sometimes requiring the entire ranch workforce to plant each year in May. The irrigated land around the ranch house became fertile ground for asparagus, which went wild after initially planted by

³⁶ Cook, *Tales of the 04 Ranch*, 42; Kate Cook, “Daily Record for 1905 [through 1908],” Box 89, Cook Papers, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument; Ron Cockrell, “‘Our Ranch is Different’: The Agate Springs Ranch on Nebraska’s Niobrara River,” Paper for Seminar in Western American History,” November 27, 1996, 4.

³⁷ James H. Cook, letter to Professor Barbour, c. 1908, Barbour Papers, University of Nebraska Archives.

³⁸ The “knitting needle” analogy was James Cook’s, recalled by Harold Cook in *Tales of the 04 Ranch*, 12.

³⁹ Cook, *Tales of the 04 Ranch*, 12.

⁴⁰ Jay Roberts, “Preliminary Sketch of the History of Agate Springs Ranch,” Midwest Regional Library, National Park Service, 24-25.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Henry Cook, James's father, during his extended stay at the ranch in the mid-1890s.⁴¹ As the trees grew, they not only created a cool, shady oasis with lawns and gardens surrounding the house, but the thousands of trees provided "a splendid and valuable winter shelter for corrals and feedlots" located at the southern end of the ranch complex. The trees also provided wood for fence posts and other purposes. According to Harold Cook many years later, the grove of trees combined with the complex of cattle sheds, feed lots, corrals, and buildings at Agate Springs Ranch headquarters was "recognized as the best and most practical situation for ranch development in this region."⁴²

Another water feature that became an integral part of the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters was a crescent-shaped oxbow lake located just to the west of the ranch house and south of the winding Niobrara. The lake, fed by a nearby spring, was long ago cut off from the main channel of the Niobrara River. When the Cooks arrived at the ranch in 1887, this pool was a shallow, murky, mud-filled oxbow with disease-carrying mosquitoes. James Cook, however, saw its practical and pleasurable possibilities. He first hired a homesteader to dredge the slough to solid rock or gravel with his ox team. The dredged muck was used to build a dike to separate the river from the pond, even during spring floods. The nearby spring trickled water into the pond. A milk house, where cream and milk were kept cool and sweet in the summer heat and where butter was made for the entire ranch was built near the waters of the pond. The pond soon became a nesting habitat for wild ducks, which the Cooks and visitors hunted in the fall. Near the pond, he also installed a machine that released tin birds, which he and others used for target practice. In winter the pond became a source of ice, cut into blocks and stored in the nearby icehouse for refrigeration of perishable goods. James Cook also stocked the pond with sunfish, bullheads, and chub. The fish ate the mosquito larvae and provided pan fish for the family. The entire Cook family, as well as their guests, enjoyed fishing in the pond and duck hunting around it. James and Kate Cook's two sons even enjoyed trapping water-loving muskrats around the pond, whose pelts they sold. A mosquito-infested slough had been refashioned into a bucolic scene with numerous recreational pursuits possible.⁴³

One member of the third generation of Cooks continued with ranching on the Niobrara River. Margaret Cook, oldest daughter of Harold and Eleanor Cook was born in 1911, and married George Hoffman in 1934. They built a house in the early 1950s near Harold's homestead cabin and to the west of the Carnegie and University Hills fossil quarries. Following in the tradition of the Agate Springs Ranch, they also planted trees for wind and shade protection. The Hoffman ranch house is considered a contributing resource in the district because it represents the continuing Cook ranching tradition and financial challenges associated with it, provides a visual link between the Agate Springs Ranch

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 12; Roberts, *History of Agate Springs*, 284-85; Meade, *Story of Agate Springs Ranch*, 16; Kate Cook, letter to Harold Cook, 17 May 1907, Box 13, Cook Papers, AGFO.

⁴² Cook, letter to Baker, 5 March 1962, Box 1, File L58, General Files (1952-1963), RG 79, CPR, NARA.

⁴³ Cook, *Tales of 04 Ranch*, 13-14, 42-43; Mead, *Story of Agate Springs Ranch*, 16; "History of Agate Springs Ranch," attached to Dorothy Cook Meade oral history interview, May 22, 1986.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

house and the fossil quarries, and a different type of ranching within the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. Dorothy Cook Meade and her husband Grayson Meade, Winifred Cook McGrew, and Gary Hoffman (son of Margaret Cook Hoffman and George Hoffman) are all buried on Windmill Hill, south of and overlooking the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters inside the historic district.

Science (paleontology)

Twenty million years ago, during the Miocene Period, great quantities of mammal bones were deposited in the sandstone sediment of what is now Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. The fossil hills at Agate became known worldwide for the abundance, variety, and completeness of their mammal bones. Henry Fairfield Osborn of Columbia University referred to the Agate fossil quarries as “the most remarkable deposits of mammalian remains of Tertiary Age that have ever been found in any part of the world.”

These fossil deposits and the excavation activities that took place in the hills near the Agate Springs Ranch are of national and international scientific significance because they provided previously unknown knowledge about animal life during the Miocene Epoch. A great concentration of Miocene fossil mammal bones are buried in a two- to three-foot thick layer of sediment that extends through Carnegie and University Hills. Commonly found mammal bones include those of *Menoceras*, *Moropus*, *Dinohyus*, and *Daphoenodon*. Additional fossil deposits also exist in nearby hills, such as Amherst Hill, the location of a concentration of *Stenomylus* fossils. Although James H. Cook discovered the fossils in the mid-1880s, serious scholarly excavations did not begin until 1904 when invited scientists from institutions such as the University of Nebraska, the Carnegie Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, Yale University and Amherst College began their nearly 20 year encampment in the area. Rivalries among the educational institutions resulted in the naming rights of the various hills leaving us today with University Hill (University of Nebraska activity), Carnegie Hill (Carnegie Museum excavation site), and Amherst Hill (Amherst College activity and *stenomylus* quarry). The first paleontologist to work at Agate was Professor Erwin Barbour of the University of Nebraska who arrived in 1891. Significant discoveries were made by the various institutions between 1904 and 1909, and again from 1911 to the mid-1920s. Activity in the late 1920s and 1930s was small in scale and often completed by volunteers. Serious scientific excavations, with a few exceptions concluded in 1924.

James Cook’s early contact with scientists near the Red Cloud Agency in the 1870s sparked a lifelong interest in the science of paleontology. During his time as a scout and guide, he met Yale University paleontologist Othniel C. Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences. Marsh was looking to search for and excavate fossil remains on land dedicated to Native Americans near the Red Cloud Agency. Cook negotiated an agreement with Chief

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

Red Cloud to assure the Native Americans that the scientist was indeed searching for bones and not for gold. Cook listened intently to the scientists and initiated his own reading and research on the topic that fascinated him, and ironically stayed with him through his discoveries at the Agate Fossil Hills for the remainder of his life. Recognizing the inherent value of the land, the Cook family homesteaded and acquired the majority of the land that makes up the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument today.

In 1892, James Cook invited University of Nebraska paleontologist Professor Erwin H. Barbour to visit Agate Ranch and inspect the fossil deposits. Barbour, pressed for time and unsure of the importance of the fossil beds, sent one of his students to inspect the fossil hills. Barbour decided not to return to Agate to excavate. Twelve more years passed before active excavation began at the fossil hills. James Cook and his young son, Harold, who developed a growing interest in paleontology as he matured, believed in the importance of the fossil hills near their ranch and tried to interest others in this site. James and Harold invited several scholarly paleontologists from universities and science museums around the United States to Agate. Eventually, many institutions sent teams of paleontologists to conduct excavations. The Cooks encouraged all to come, and by so doing, inadvertently stimulated rivalries between some of them. Between 1904 and 1908, field crews from Carnegie Museum, the University of Nebraska, Amherst College, the American Museum of Natural History, Yale University and others converged on the fossil beds at Carnegie, University, and Amherst Hills. Olaf A. Peterson of the Carnegie Museum, who first visited Carnegie Hill in 1904, is credited with identifying the great scientific value of the fossil discoveries near Agate. Field crews working at Carnegie and University Hills during the summer typically set up tents for sleeping, eating, and for conducting office work near Agate Springs Ranch. By 1906, modest frame shacks were also used by field crews, which included what later became Harold Cook's homestead also known as the bone shack. Despite growing conflicts between competing paleontologists working at the fossil quarries, the early period of scientific excavations climaxed in the summer of 1908. Some paleontologists determined that they had adequate samples from the quarries and needed no more. Yale, Amherst, and Carnegie conducted no further work at Agate after 1908 and 1909. Paleontology work dwindled in 1909 and none took place in 1910.

Probably in early 1909, after Harold Cook returned to Agate from his studies at Columbia University and at the laboratories of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, the bone shack was moved from its location north of the Niobrara to a site about one mile to the southwest, near the base of Carnegie Hill's western slope. It thereafter served as the homestead claim cabin of Harold Cook, who filed a claim for ownership of this parcel in August 1908. Later, it served as a base of operations for future fossil excavations at the quarries. The Harold Cook Bone cabin site and related resources was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. In 1985, the nomination was amended and upgraded to include significance at the national level for the direct and important association with the

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

scientific investigation of paleontological fossils at Carnegie Hill, University Hill, and Amherst Hill.⁴⁴ The Cook Homestead Cabin is the most tangible building linked to the path-breaking discoveries made at the fossil quarries near Agate, particularly of the complete samples of chalicothere. Discoveries of ancient fossils spotlighted and influenced theories of evolution hotly debated across North America in the early twentieth century. Between 1909 and 1923, Harold used the cabin as part of a homestead claim. It was most extensively used, however, by the American Museum of Natural History paleontological excavation crews through the mid-1920s.

The final phase of discovery and intense excavations at Agate's fossil hills occurred between 1911 and 1923. During this period, the American Museum of Natural History conducted extensive excavations under the field leadership of Albert ("Bill") Thomson. Thomson and his crew uncovered several chalicotheres. Chalicotheres were a group of herbivorous odd-toed ungulate mammals spread throughout the country during the early Eocene and Pleistocene epochs. After subdividing to adapt to different terrains, one for open range and one for woodlands, the knuckle-walking, claw-toed chalicothere died out around 3.5 million years ago. Seventeen Chalicothere Moropus specimens were excavated. The Moropus specimen reached the size of a horse, approximately eight feet tall much larger than the standard size which was more like a small dog. Chalicotheres Moropus are related to the modern horse, tapir, and rhinoceros. These proved to be the most complete samples of chalicothere known in the world. Thomson and his field crew at first used their own shack. Between 1914 and 1927, Bill Thomson moved into Harold Cook's Homestead Cabin and used it as a staging area during the years of important chalicotheres excavations. Beginning in 1921, Thomson began focusing in other areas near the Agate fossil quarries, and his crew continued to use the Cook Homestead cabin as a base. Thomson conducted his final major excavation at the Agate fossil quarries in 1923.

Criterion B

James Henry Cook/Harold Cook

James Henry Cook is significant for his contribution to ranching developments on the semi-arid, short- and mixed-grass High Plains prairies, for his role in advancing important paleontological investigations on his property, and for encouraging a greater understanding and appreciation of Sioux Indians and their history and culture. Throughout his ownership of the Agate Springs Ranch, Cook employed many innovative ideas to make it a viable and thriving operation for his family. He attempted to establish a ranch for breeding and raising race horses, he planned for and struggled with the consequences of cyclical drought and periodic low depressed market prices, and worked through economic depressions. Despite these challenges, however, he persisted in developing an innovative and successful ranch. He

⁴⁴ Richard Ortega, "Harold J. Cook Homestead Cabin National Register of Historic Places Nomination," 1 March 1976 (approved 24 August 1977); Charles Trupia, "Harold J. Cook Homestead/Bone Cabin Complex National Register Historic Places Nomination Amendment," 1985 (approved 19 December 1986).

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Name of Property

Sioux County, NE

County and State

added acreage over several decades, constructed or moved many buildings to it, and built one of the earliest irrigation systems on the upper Niobrara. Despite a mounting debt, James Cook succeeded in transforming a once open treeless ranch headquarters into a lush green island oasis on the dry windy High Plains. Cook was primarily responsible for creating a unique, totally constructed utilitarian and aesthetically pleasing ranch operation.

James Cook was also fundamentally responsible for making the Agate Springs Ranch a cultural and scientific oasis as well. Cook's personal curiosity about natural science and his encouragement of paleontological investigations at the fossil quarries made his home a gathering place for renowned scientists from all over the country. Also, James Cook's trusted long-term relationship with Red Cloud encouraged the annual visits of his friend and spawned the birth of a sizeable collection of Indian artifacts that Cook shared with the public in a museum housed in his ranch house. James Cook, therefore, contributed to developments in nationally significant investigations in paleontology and to expanding cultural awareness in the region.

James Henry Cook was born on August 26, 1857 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, to an English sailing father, Henry Cook, and a Scottish mother, Elizabeth Shaw. Following the disappearance of his mother when Cook was two years old, Henry Cook placed young James and his older brother, John Franklin Cook, in the care of separate adopted Kalamazoo families. James Cook grew up with the E. P. Titus family, who taught him much about hunting, marksmanship, and other outdoor skills, and imbued in him a strong sense of acceptance of different cultures and human justice. Reflecting many years later on the Titus's early influence on his life, James Cook recalled that "its members had been raised after the severest models of order, industry, frugality, integrity, and every Christian virtue."⁴⁵ He vividly remembered that, as officers in the Underground Railroad during the Civil War, the Titus's were distinctly anti-slavery. Cook's formal education ended at around age twelve, when he followed in his father's footsteps and took up sailing on Lake Michigan for a few months. Unhappy in this pursuit, he decided to head west for new adventures among cattlemen. Near Wichita, Kansas, James Cook worked as a cattle herder for several months before meeting cowboys driving cattle between southwestern Texas and Kansas and joined them on their return trip to Texas. Cook began herding cattle on Texas ranches at a time when the open, unfenced range, robust markets, and plentiful investment capital made cattle ranching a lucrative business. During the early and mid-1870s, Cook became well acquainted with some of the larger cattle drivers. Between 1874 and 1877, Cook participated in major cattle drives over the Chisholm and other cattle trails between Texas and Kansas, then Nebraska.

It was during Cook's time as a cattle driver that he first met Red Cloud in 1874 at the age of 17 at the Red Cloud Agency on the White River in northwestern Nebraska. Well-known and greatly respected army scout, big-game hunter, and

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Indian interpreter, Baptiste Garnier, introduced the two men. Chief Red Cloud, then fifty-four years old, invited the seventeen-year-old Cook into his lodge, where Cook was asked to talk with many of Red Cloud's sub-chiefs and warriors about the country, wildlife, and Indian tribes inhabiting the vast territory between the North Platte River and the Gulf of Mexico. Cook talked that day with Red Cloud and the other Sioux about his love of traveling over the plains and mountains, of the wildlife, and all the wonderful works of the Great Spirit. Notably Cook did not speak the Lakota language and Red Cloud never spoke English. The two were able to find a method of communication without a common language. This was a significant achievement given their vast age difference and lifestyles. Red Cloud was himself a student of nature with a vast knowledge of the plants and animals inhabiting the land his people occupied. Cook's knowledge of nature, his understanding of the radical changes unfolding in the Sioux's home territory, and his empathy for the meaning of these momentous changes for the Sioux engaged Red Cloud and his sub-chiefs. Reflecting on this meeting nearly fifty years later, Cook wrote: "The fact that I met him on the common ground of a hunter and dweller in the Plains country, and in a different manner from most white men, had much to do, I think, with the establishing of a friendship that grew with the passing years."⁴⁶ The friendship that began between Red Cloud and James Cook in 1874 would continue for the next thirty-five years until Red Cloud's death at age 88 in 1909.⁴⁷

By the time Cook and Red Cloud formed their friendship Red Cloud was nearing the end of his role as a leader and diplomat for the Oglala Sioux people. He was seen as one of their fiercest warriors and a strong leader. Red Cloud played an influential role in negotiating the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty that resulted in the U.S. Army's abandonment of forts along the Bozeman Trail in the Powder River region of Wyoming and the creation of the enormous Great Sioux Reservation, encompassing most of western South Dakota. Beginning in 1870, around the time that Red Cloud moved onto a reservation, he made his first of numerous trips to Washington, DC and other eastern cities, where he took part in discussions and negotiations with politicians, scientists, and the general public. On these trips and on other occasions he became a much photographed and a widely recognized subject.

At the time Red Cloud and James Cook met in 1874 on the Red Cloud Agency in northwestern Nebraska, Red Cloud and the Sioux became embroiled in a series of major crises—the relinquishment of the Black Hills to the Americans (1876), the war following the Custer battle (1876-77), the massive reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, and the conflict and killing resulting from the Ghost Dance crisis of 1890. Just one year earlier, Red Cloud began making his annual trips from the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwestern South Dakota to Agate Springs Ranch to visit James Cook. Other members of both the Lakota and Cheyenne often accompanied Red Cloud on these visits or came on their own.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 186-87.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 166-67, 186-87, 195-96, 85,

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

After Red Cloud's death in 1909, the members of his family and Lakota and Northern Cheyenne band members continued to visit Cook at his ranch until Cook's death in 1942.

James Cook and Red Cloud's lifelong friendship illustrates the underlying respect both men had for each other, and their abilities as diplomats among their people. Red Cloud's annual visits to Cook at the Agate Springs Ranch opened a dialog between area residents and Native Americans that without this relationship would not have been nurtured among the parties. Cook's upbringing and core beliefs brought diversity to his ranch that was not often seen elsewhere. He not only built friendships with many Native Americans, but employed them, supported them politically, and helped spread their culture by opening his museum.

Cook also employed African-Americans on his ranch. He often lamented the lack of good ranch workers and the longevity of their service. However, he had a few that were special and stayed to work the ranch for many years. One of these men was John Butler. Butler was a retired sergeant from Fort Robinson and was an African-American born into slavery. Cook built friendships and professional relationships with many of the soldiers from the Ninth Regiment of the U.S. Cavalry at Fort Robinson, especially those who were retired. Fort Robinson was the home to the all-black Ninth Regiment in the 1880s where they served the west after gaining notoriety when they were formed right after the Civil War in 1866. The Ninth was famously known as the buffalo soldiers. When John Butler retired from the Ninth, Cook hired him to work on the ranch. He started working for the Cooks in the 1890s and stayed on until his retirement in 1910. Cook said about Butler, that "He could go into the herd, after it was rounded up and in the corral, and catch an animal by walking up to it, whereas most cowpunchers would have to rope the horse to get near it... We all liked him very much, and he was my devoted friend."⁴⁸

James Cook continued to build relationships with the widest breadth of society at the time. His friendships with African-Americans and Native Americans built bonds among diverse groups of people. Cook saw his ranch and many others as an attraction, a place to visit, stay, build friendships, and experience the west. Throughout his years at the ranch many well-known visitors spent time there. He maintained his relationships with some of his early clients from his big-game hunting days, he built political and business ties and hosted the likes of members of the Montgomery Ward family, military officers from Fort Robinson, and politicians. Some seasons saw the ranch crowded with visitors from Red Cloud's bands to friends from the east and west. Ironically, Cook and his family were not well entrenched in a neighborly way with their most immediately adjacent neighbors. In fact, some in the area believed the Cooks to be pretentious and spending

⁴⁸ Gail Evans-Hatch, *Centuries Along the Upper Niobrara*, National Park Service, 2008, 209.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

too much time being engaged in the lives and activities of people far beyond the geographic limits of Agate Springs ranch. Their proliferation of prominent visitors contributed to the neighbors' perception of the Cooks as aristocracy.⁴⁹

Scientists invited by James Cook stayed in the area for many years to research the paleontological remains found in the hills near the ranch. In the mid-1880s, Cook and his then fiancé Kate Graham, during a casual horseback ride, discovered what they thought were unusual bones protruding from the hills near their ranch (later known as Carnegie and University Hills). His early contact in the 1870s with Yale paleontologist Othniel C. March and Edward Drinker Cope of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences piqued Cook's interest in and awareness of the potential for fossilized remains in the area. He attended lectures, read papers, and was constantly on the look-out for exposed fossil material to pass along to the experts in the field. Harold, James' son, grew up with this exposure to the fossils and became a well-known paleontologist himself. He wrote of his father's discovery, "his perspectives and information on geology and prehistoric life which caused him to appreciate and take the greatest interest in fossils found on this ranch, beyond what any ordinary ranchman would have done...He read technical reports and understood and remembered them, as few non-college trained men would have done."

Although excavations did not take place immediately Cook encouraged and facilitated the paleontological research done at the Agate fossil beds. He spread the news of his find to appropriate sources including the Wyoming Territorial and Nebraska State Geologists. Cook and his family played a significant role in the paleontological studies undertaken at the fossil hills. They acquired the land to protect it and open it for research, and permitted their land to be used for field camps and staging areas for processing the newly excavated fossils. He developed long-term friendships with the nationally known scientists who excavated the hills.

Significant excavations at Carnegie and University Hills took place during the decade between 1900 and 1910. This was a time of intense interest and activity at Agate fossil hills with crews from the Carnegie Museum, the University of Nebraska, Amherst College, the American Museum of Natural History and Yale University. Excavations continued through 1909, but slowed significantly after. Harold Cook, James' son, lead many excavations in the decade between 1910 and 1920, with the final phase of excavations taking place between 1911 and 1923. Cook gradually turned over the daily operations of the ranch to Harold.

During the excavations, Cook continued to run the ranch with extensive haying of the ranch's staple crop of grasses, and running cattle. Cook continued to build his and his family's holdings in the area to protect the fossil hills and to successfully run their cattle. By 1910, they had land that "extends some ten miles along the Niobrara River," according to

⁴⁹ Ron Cockrell, "Our Ranch is Different, 10

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Name of Property

Erwin Barbour, and that Cook further “controls some 15,000 acres and has one thousand acres under irrigation ditch...He now controls one of the largest and best equipped ranches in Nebraska.”⁵⁰ However, in order to obtain this significant amount of land, which included all of the fossil hills, Cook took on debt. He struggled with the debt on the ranch for years to come, although the Agate Springs Ranch and the Fossil Hills, under Cook’s guidance remained a vital place full of family and visitors. Cook managed his debt on the land, revealing to his son in 1914, “I have struggled for years under a pretty heavy load of them (loans) and at times I have been in the position of an abject slave to bankers and others.”⁵¹ The Depression and drought of the 1920s and 1930s worsened ranch affairs that were already stretched thin by their existing heavy debt. By 1909 the pressures of such debt may well have contributed to Kate Graham Cook’s (James’ wife) suffering a nervous breakdown from which she never recovered. After being institutionalized in Lincoln at the age of 41, she never returned to the ranch. James and Harold liquidated her holdings in the ranch and used the proceeds to relieve some of their debt. Even during this dark time Willoughby Walling (one of the debt holders) expressed his confidence in their ranch operation saying in 1923, “As a cattle proposition, you have an unusual plant which will make money whenever money can be made in the cattle business.”⁵² Despite this confidence, James Cook faced foreclosure more than once on his property. He never gave up, and crafted an intricate deal between multiple banks, the Alliance Production Credit Association, and the New Deal Farm Credit Administration to create a financial structure that helped them survive the devastating Great Depression. The survival of their ranch during this drought-stricken agricultural depression speaks volumes about the Cooks’ staunch support from their friends, lenders, and their strong multi-generation family structure.

At the end of his life James Cook saw his vision of the Cook Museum of Natural History come to life. Three rooms in the ranch house were taken up with exhibits of the Cook family’s collections of Native American artifacts, bones, and historical frontier items. In 1938 the museum was written about as “one of the most famous meccas for visitors in the west and its scientific and historic value is growing in public appreciation.”⁵³ Harold Cook continued to promote the museum, and his own scientific endeavors. By this time James Cook was elderly, had published a book about his life called *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*, and had multiple articles written about him and his accomplishments. He completed a second book called *Longhorn Cowboy* in 1942. This appreciation of the family history carried over to the younger generations, with Harold Cook encouraging his grandmother and other family members to record memories of their lives.

⁵⁰ Barbour, “James Henry Cook,” 481

⁵¹ Ron Cockrell, “Our Ranch is Different,” 16

⁵² Willoughby G. Walling, letter to James Cook, 6 November 1923, Box 54 Cook Papers, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

⁵³ A. B. Wood, editor, *Pioneer Tales of Nebraska Panhandle*, 198

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Name of Property

Sioux County, NE

County and State

Harold organized a large and festive birthday party for his father's 82nd birthday in 1939. Many of the famous scientists attended, and though nearly deaf at the time James Cook reveled in the celebration. He died at his home on Agate Springs Ranch on January 27, 1942 at the age of 84. Harold Cook carried on the ranch operations and scientific excavations after his father's death. His children stayed in the area and built on the land. He died in 1962 at the age of 75 from complications of pneumonia.⁵⁴

Harold's dedication to the science of paleontology was cemented in him as a young child. He witnessed his father's dedication to the land, his diplomatic abilities, his diverse interests, and his passion toward science. Harold's homestead, the Bone Cabin, is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Bone Cabin National Register Nomination elaborates on his contributions to the site. Among his most notable achievements are his scientific career as a paleontologist, a never ceasing advocacy for the recognition of the importance of the site for both its natural beauty and its significant scientific deposits, his participation in groups like the Good Roads Association to bring graded roads to the area, and his final accomplishment of helping the NPS create the new National Monument.

Criterion D: Likely to Yield Important Information

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is eligible under Criterion D for the District's archeological research potential. As noted by Bozell⁵⁵ and others, all major cultural traditions are represented by the archeological sites included within the boundaries of this historic district. These resources span a period of time that begins approximately 10,000 years ago, and continues into the early 20th century. As documented through the National Register nomination of nearby Wind Springs Ranch Archeological District (2000), numerous questions regarding technology, subsistence, settlement patterns, geomorphology and cultural-historical research may be answered through additional investigations at sites located within this district.

In the High Plains region, the cultural chronology begins with Paleoindian (12,000 - 8,000 years before present). Throughout this time period, people living in this region would have been highly mobile and they are often referred to as "big game hunters" because they are associated with now extinct large mammals such as mammoth and an extinct form of bison. Undoubtedly, smaller mammals and plant foods were also utilized. Characteristic of this time period are large, distinctive projectile points. Evidence of living structure and hearths are rare.

The Archaic period follows, beginning about 8,000 years ago and continuing until about 1,500 years ago. The Archaic period is divided into Early, Middle and Late periods. Though people living in the Archaic period were still highly

⁵⁴ Gail Evans-Hatch, *Centuries Along the Niobrara*, 2008

⁵⁵ Bozell, 65.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

mobile, they were slightly less mobile than Paleoindian. During the Archaic period, subsistence changes and the archeological record reveals the use of ground stone and pit hearth food processing. It is during this time that we start to see evidence of pit houses and tipi rings. These activities leave a stronger signature in the archeological record.

The Late Prehistoric period generally begins around 2,000 years ago and ends about 300 years ago. It is during this time frame that the classic bow and arrow is utilized, and projectile points become smaller. The use of pottery becomes evident on the High Plains during this time period.

At the beginning of the Protohistoric and Post-Contact period, 400 - 100 years ago, archeologists do not yet have enough data to connect archeological sites with historically known Native American tribes. However, by the late 1700's and into the early 1800's some loose connections can be made to the Pawnee/ Arikara, the Plains Apache, and Lakota.

The Euroamerican presence on the high plains begins with fur trading activities, followed by the establishment of military forts. Open range cattle and sheep operations were present in the 1860's and 1870's, and the passage of the Kinkaid Act in 1904 served to encourage additional Euroamerican settlement of the region.

When considered individually, most of the archeological sites described within this nomination would not be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument provides a unique opportunity to recognize the research potential of this collection of sites located in an area that is often considered to be marginal. The sites contained within this nomination represent an "occasional, temporary, and transitory use of the area"⁵⁶ and according to Bozell, these are sites whose research potential has easily been ignored by archeologists.

MacDonell and Wandsnider (2003) developed a model that views this region as a 'linear resource island.' That is, it and similar environments were used by small groups of prehistoric people traveling through the area in search of regions of increased resource constancy. The relatively sparse number of artifacts, features, and faunal remains at...properties are consistent with the area being used primarily to travel through and not as a destination for establishment of habitation sites. Certainly research at any number of High Plains bison kills and habitation sites over the years overshadows study areas like Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. Nevertheless, understanding what people were doing and why in more marginal areas is needed for a complete understanding of Native

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Americans on the High Plains.⁵⁷

Additional research and interpretation of these sites as a collection will help archeologists as they strive to understand how prehistoric people utilized marginal areas and linear resource islands.

When viewed holistically, the archeological record present within the boundaries of this district represents human habitation beginning approximately 10,000 years ago. Systematic investigations of this area will help provide a better understanding of Native American adaptation across the region and will help guide additional research throughout the High Plains. Significant research opportunities include culture history, subsistence pursuits, site formation processes, lithic procurement, and technology and settlement patterns.

The presence of Paleoindian and Early Archaic people, within this district is based upon diagnostic projectile points collected from the ground surface. This poses questions regarding long term and sustained use of the area by these populations. These artifacts may be present due to processes that do not represent Paleoindian and Early Archaic use of the area, but rather represent later populations recycling Paleoindian and Early Archaic stone tools. Additional archeological research at sites within this district will help to contribute to our knowledge and understanding regarding what the archeological record on the High Plains looks like relative to Paleoindian and Early Archaic populations. Geomorphological investigations will complement this effort and will help to identify those areas that contain buried and deeply buried cultural materials. In addition, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) models developed by Wandsnider and MacDonell can help identify the archeological potential of landforms within this historic district.

Advances in GIS modeling may help answer important questions regarding function of the rock cairn sites. Across the High Plains, rock cairns are poorly understood and have been interpreted variously as trail markers, as grave markers, as structures related to game lines and as vision quest sites. Vision quest sites are generally poorly understood. Several of the cairn sites identified in this nomination (25SX2, 25SX154, 25SX159, 25SX293, 25SX495, 25SX496, 25SX679, 25SX680) are very similar in form to other recognized vision quest sites in the mountain west.⁵⁸ Though at least one of the cairns may have been constructed by Harold Cook, spatial analysis of the cairn sites will help confirm their use and function.

⁵⁶ Bozell, 65.

⁵⁷ Bozell, 66.

⁵⁸Hartley, Ralph J. and Anne M. Wolley Vawser, *Human Modifications to the Landscape of Hunt and Sheep Mountains, Wyoming: Exploring Socially Constructed Space*. Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Investigations of historic archeological sites within the district can help to develop a better understanding of early Euroamerican settlement in the area, will yield information regarding Native American contact with early pioneers in the region, and will help researchers better understand settlement, technology, economics and life on the High Plains during the historic period. In addition, those historic sites that may be related to early paleontological research within the district will answer questions regarding technology and methodology associated with quarrying activities, as well as the camp life of early paleontologists on the high plains as they were working to establish the science of paleontology.

The physical integrity of the archeological sites contained within this district is varied. Some sites located upon terraces appear to have intact deposits, though the extent of these deposits is yet unknown. At the other end of the spectrum, some sites have been subjected to natural processes such as erosion. Modern interpretive features, such as the visitor center, trails and interpretive signage have generally been sensitive to the archeological landscape present within the district. Physical impacts to sites have occurred, however, with regard to construction of the new visitor center in 1992-1993, and the construction of roads throughout the district. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument enjoys a long stewardship by both the Cook Family and the NPS. This district will continue to be well maintained into the future. This property has good physical integrity and retains many aspects of integrity, including setting, feeling, location, design and materials.

The collection of sites and resources present at the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument make this a unique historic property, a property that has the potential to help guide research regarding 10,000 years of human occupation on the High Plains.

The Road to a National Monument

The Cook Family lead by both James and his son Harold were staunch advocates for the significance and preservation of their ranch and the fossil remains interred within. Beginning in the 1920s the effort was solidified between father and son. At this time the Cooks pursued state park recognition from the state of Nebraska. They sought to sell their land to the state and maintain and operate a museum to display their impressive collection of fossils and Native American artifacts. This proposal was supported by the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs who pushed the state to acquire the land as a park.

Harold became the president of the Good Roads Association in the 1920s and pushed for a state highway to replace the well-traveled trail near their house. Cook recognized the importance of the automobile to bring tourists to see their collections, and as a tool for use in excavations. He used the dream of a monument and a museum to justify the road.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

His efforts were successful, and in 1923, engineers began surveying Nebraska State Highway 29 from Harrison to Agate. By 1929, the last link of Highway 29 opened, connecting motorists from Mitchell to Agate.⁵⁹

The 1916 National Park Service Organic Act, the establishment of Dinosaur National Monument in 1915, and Scotts Bluff National Monument in 1919 inspired the Cooks to contact the federal agency to promote their significant site. NPS Director Horace M. Albright was invited by the Cooks to visit their site in the 1930s. He was duly impressed with the property, the artifacts in their collection, and their dedication. After many economic struggles incurred to retain the land in the family, Harold Cook took a job as a temporary ranger at Scotts Bluff National Monument in 1930. He eventually became the temporary custodian of the site. Harold's passion for the NPS did not seem to diminish even after his termination from that position after less than two years. Despite this, Cook continued to excavate at the fossil hills and take care of his family and aging father. James Cook's passing in 1942 did not deter the passion of his family who continued to reside on the ranch.

In 1960, as a part of the Mission 66 program, the NPS identified the Agate Springs Fossil Quarries in an inventory of significant scientific areas in America. A follow up study completed by Larry Knowles in 1961 titled "Preliminary Study of Agate Springs Quarries" documented the NPS plans for a new monument in northwest Nebraska and provided the basis for presenting the proposed monument to Congress as well as all subsequent planning efforts in the park. Agate was described in the report as a site of national significance, and as an "outstanding chapter of life pertaining to Miocene mammals as Dinosaur National Monument is to Jurassic reptiles."⁶⁰ Harold Cook emphasized that the hills at Agate retained significant potential to reveal additional interpretive material from the Miocene era. He wanted to ensure that if he donated the land the collections as well as the site would be cared for and preserved.

The initial proposal included the Agate Springs Ranch within the boundaries of the monument to be used as the visitor center and headquarters. In April 1961 the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments agreed that Agate Springs Fossil Quarries should be acquired and become a national monument. However, in the spring of 1962, Harold Cook chose to have the Ranch continue in its use as an operating ranch and laid out a deal by which the NPS could acquire the land for the monument through his donation and the purchase from the Hoffman's (his daughter and son-in-law living in their 1952 ranch house currently located within the monument boundaries). The deal was never finalized because of Harold's sudden death. Due to complications with family negotiations, Agate Springs Fossil Quarries did not become Agate Fossil Beds National Monument until June 1965 when it was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. The Cook Collection of Native American artifacts was donated in 1968 and remains on display today.

⁵⁹ Ron Cockrell, "Bones of Agate" Administrative History, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Ron Cockrell, "Bones of Agate" Administrative History, p. 45

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Other important family papers and collections were also donated to the National Park Service, except for paleontology type specimens, which were given to the American Museum of Natural History in New York

Conclusion

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is a significant historic district that was deemed National Register eligible by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officer in July 2004.⁶¹ The district is geographically unified by the Niobrara River, which meanders through its entire mid-section from west to east, and by a series of prominent knolls, ridges, and buttes that project high above the river. These high ridges and buttes, extending east and west at the periphery of the proposed historic district, create and contain a U-shaped trough. The unique combination of natural features has drawn humans (and prehistoric animals before them) to this place for thousands of years, and their activities and associations with this place in nature have, in turn, created a distinctive historic district. The boundaries of the district encompass the paleontological sites of national importance at the twin fossil hills, as well as the *Daemonelix* site and the *Stenomylus* Quarry, the Harold Cook homestead claim cabin/encampment for paleontological field crews (known by the Cook family as East Agate), and Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, which served as a gathering place for paleontologists who came from around the world to conduct field work at the fossil quarries. The ranch headquarters also served as a gathering place for Lakota and Northern Cheyenne Indians, who visited James Cook annually between the late 1880s and 1942. The Niobrara River links the Agate Springs Ranch with East Agate and the fossil quarries there; the high ridges paralleling the river visually contain this significant historic district. Open unobstructed views between the Agate Springs Ranch headquarters and East Agate and the nearby fossil quarries further connect these important features.

The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument meets National Register Criterion A, B, and D. Several places and cultural resources in the district are associated with events and activities (Criterion A) that have contributed to the broad historical patterns related to ethnic heritage (Red Cloud and Sioux/Cheyenne), to agriculture (ranching) in the High Plains, and to science (paleontology). Two individuals (Criterion B), James Henry Cook, early and long-time rancher on the semi-arid upper Niobrara River, and Harold Cook noted geologist and paleontologist, made significant contributions to developments in ranching on the High Plains and paleontological and cultural endeavors in the region. Finally, cultural resources within the district, both archeological and paleontological, are likely to yield information that will expand human understanding of progressive changes on earth before the arrival of humans, of prehistoric human life, and of humans during historic times (Criterion D). The features and resources in this district are significant in the regional history of the High Plains (ethnic heritage and ranching) and in national history (James Cook, archeology, and paleontology), during the period of 8,000 years ago to 1942.

⁶¹ "Consensus Determination of Eligibility, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument," 28 July 2004 and Ruthanne Knudson, letter to Lawrence J. Sommer, 20 July 2004, both at Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

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Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

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Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Name of Property

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Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

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Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): See continuation sheet Section 7 page 24-27

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3055

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>13</u>	<u>599000</u>	<u>4698758</u>	3	<u>13</u>	<u>599976</u>	<u>4698190</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>13</u>	<u>599976</u>	<u>4698758</u>	4	<u>13</u>	<u>600580</u>	<u>4697595</u>

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
 Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
 County and State

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Geographical Data continued UTM's

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5	13	602611	4697641
6	13	604564	4698655
7	13	605168	4698695
8	13	605256	4695742
9	13	603849	4695647
10	13	603817	4696190
11	13	600568	4696174
12	13	600153	4696582
13	13	599000	4696582
Stenomylus Quarry/Amherst Hill			
14	13	607149	4696214
15	13	607709	4696198
16	13	607710	4695814
17	13	607123	4695798

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries coincide with the congressionally designated boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. The boundary line of this historic district is located on two adjoining 1:24,000 scale USGS maps ("Agate, Nebraska" and "Whistle Creek NW, Nebraska") that accompany this nomination. The boundary can also be described generally as: beginning in the northwest corner of the district at the NW corner of Section 6, Township 28 North, Range 55 West, then extending east along the northern edge of Section 6, then south and then southeast to a point along the boundary between sections 6 and 5, then east across Section 5 and part of Section 4, then northeast across Sections 4 and some of 3, then directly east, then directly south through Section 10 to its southern boundary, then west along this section line to the Section line between 9 and 10, then directly north for a short distance, then directly west through the mid-portion of sections 9 and 8 to the section line between sections 8 and 7, then northwest and west across Section 7 to the section line between Section 7 and Section 12 of Township 28 North, Range 56 West, then north along this section line to the point of beginning. The *Stenomylus* Quarry unit of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument occupies a small rectangular area in the western side of sections 12 and 13.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of this nomination coincide with the congressionally designated boundaries of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. Included within the congressionally designated boundaries of the district are two privately owned parcels at the northeast and southwest edges of the Monument. These privately owned parcels are controlled by scenic

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

easements. This nomination also includes Carnegie Hill, University Hill, and the *Daemonelix* site, as well as Amherst Hill or the *Stenomylus* Quarry which is a discontinuous piece of the district. These boundaries were chosen because they encompass the historic development associated with the significant events that happened at the site. The ranch represents the Cook family and how their activity impacted the natural features of the quarry hills, and the sites where significant paleontological finds were made.

The Niobrara River, with its bordering wetlands and narrow valley floor, along with the rolling uplands terraces and ridge tops above that parallel the river, form a topographically and historically discrete and naturally contained district. The meandering course of the Niobrara River, which flows through the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument from west to east, forms the historical focal point of human and animal subsistence and is the geographic backbone of this district. Several prominent knolls and ridge tops that parallel the river course and trend generally east and west, form the upper edge of an elongated U-shaped trough and provide a natural topographic boundary for the district. The highest ridge and butte tops rise nearly 300 feet above the 4,400-foot valley floor. This natural boundary coincides with and provides part of the justification for selecting boundaries for Agate Fossil Beds National Monument and its two adjoining viewshed areas at each end of the park. The Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, including its discontinuous unit (*Stenomylus* Quarry Unit), encompasses 3,055 acres. It is about four miles long (from east to west) and between one and two miles wide (north to south). Roughly 800 acres of this district is privately owned land encompassed by the park boundary.

The boundaries of the district encompass the paleontological sites of national importance at the twin fossil hills, as well as the *Daemonelix* site and the *Stenomylus* Quarry, the prehistoric and historic archeological sites, the Harold Cook homestead claim cabin/encampment for paleontological field crews (known by the Cook family as East Agate), and Agate Springs Ranch headquarters, which served as a gathering place for paleontologists who came from around the world to conduct field work at the fossil quarries. The ranch headquarters also served as a gathering place for Lakota and Cheyenne Indians, who visited James Cook annually between the late 1880s and 1942. The Niobrara River links the Agate Springs Ranch with East Agate and the fossil quarries there; the high ridges paralleling the river visually contain this significant historic district.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melissa Dirr Gengler, Stacy Stupka-Burda, BVH Architects with Gail Evans-Hatch
organization Historic Resources Group, Inc. and BVH Architects date September 2012
street & number 442 South 28th Street telephone 402-770-5877

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68510

e-mail Melissa@hrq-nebraska.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Photo Log:

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: Rock Cairn/Mound at north central portion of site, camera facing north
Photograph Number: 1 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of Ranch lane with cottonwoods, camera facing south
Photograph Number: 2 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of northeast corner of Ranch House, camera facing southwest
Photograph Number: 3 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Sioux County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

Description of View: View of ice house and house additions, camera facing southeast

Photograph Number: 4 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of courtyard surrounded by cottonwoods located south of main ranch house, camera facing south

Photograph Number: 5 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of wood pile at the south side of the ranch, camera facing west

Photograph Number: 6 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of cattle corrals at south end of ranch, camera facing south

Photograph Number: 7 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of ranch hands house located south of the main ranch house, camera facing south west

Photograph Number: 8 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of metal clad garage, camera facing north

Photograph Number: 9 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler

Date: September 2012

Description of View: View of post office and garage buildings, camera facing west

Photograph Number: 10 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

Sioux County, NE
County and State

Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of path toward daemonelex hills with path in foreground , camera facing north
Photograph Number: 11 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of Bone Cabin with fossil hills in background, camera facing south
Photograph Number: 12 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of Bone Cabin and Hoffman House, camera facing south
Photograph Number: 13 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of NPS Interpretive Center with University and Carnegie Hills in the background, camera facing south
Photograph Number: 14 of 15

Property Name: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
County and State: Sioux County, Nebraska
Photographer's Name: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date: September 2012
Description of View: View of NPS housing at eastern edge of district, camera facing east
Photograph Number: 15 of 15

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name NPS/AGFO
street & number 301 River Road telephone _____
city or town Harrison state NE zip code 69346

Agate Ranch, Inc.
c/o John Skavdahl, Attorney
P.O. Box 156
Harrison, NE 69346

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Name of Property

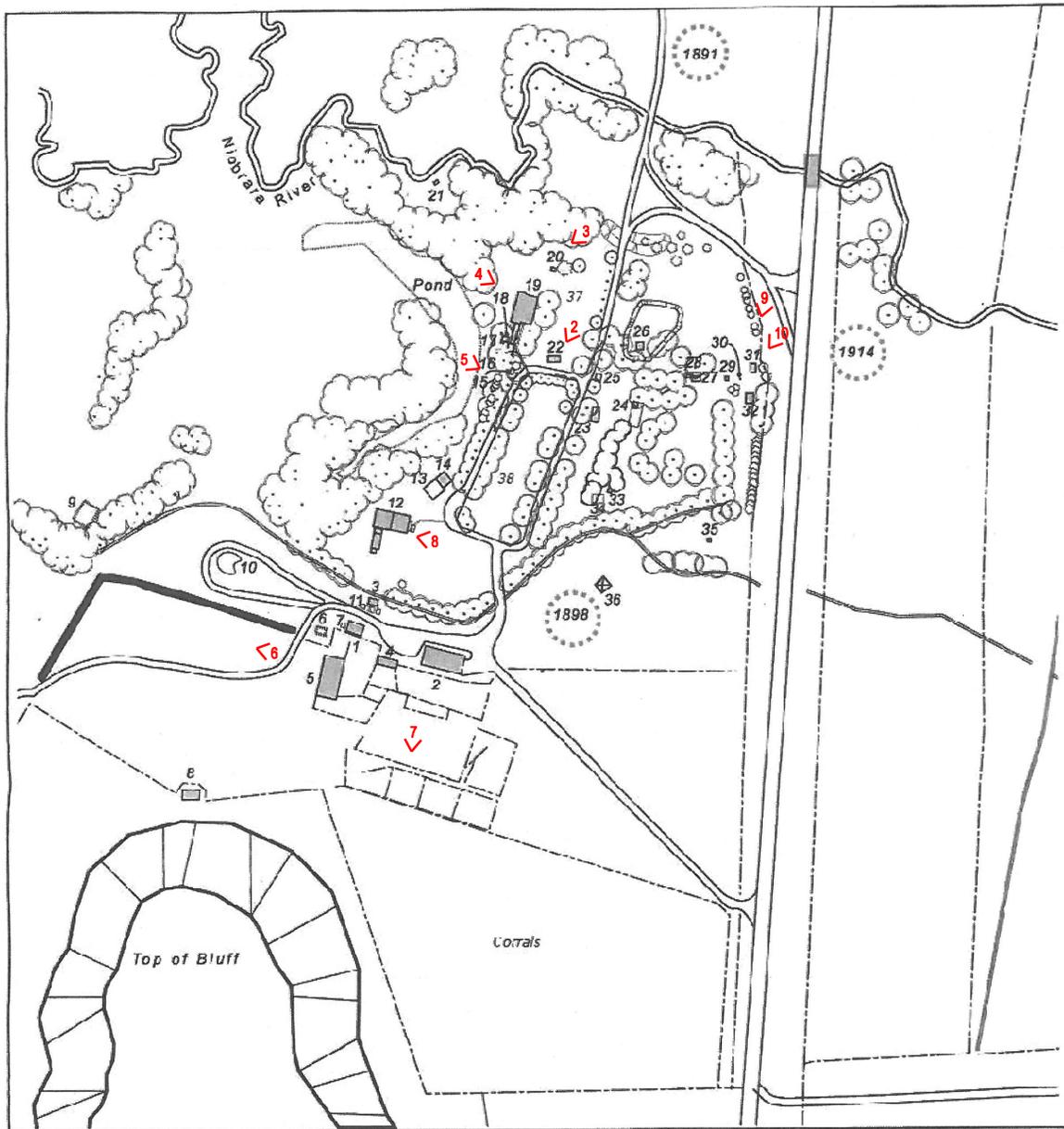
Sioux County, NE
County and State

Charles and Donna Skavdahl
453 River Road
Harrison, NE 69346

Nebraska Department of Roads
District 5 Main Office
PO Box 220
140375 Rundell Road
Gering, NE 69341

Sioux County
P.O. Box 158
Harrison, NE 69346

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



C = Contributing
 NC = Non-contributing

Legend

- Building
- Ruin or Remnant of Building
- Farm Drive
- Irrigation Ditch (C)
- Tree Grove (C)
- Shrubs (C)
- Red Cloud Campsite (C) (approx. locations)
- Fence
- Niobara River
- Wood Pile
- Pond
- Bridge (C)
- Elevated Landform
- Mixed Understory Vegetation

Key

- 1. Barn/Shed (C)
- 2. Aluminum Vehicle Storage (NC)
- 3. Shed (NC)
- 4. Shed (NC)
- 5. Shed (NC)
- 6. Chicken House Ruins
- 7. Diesel Tank
- 8. Ruin of Shed
- 9. Spring House Ruin
- 10. Root Cellar
- 11. Raised Tanks
- 12. Buskhouse (C)
- 13. Concrete Basketball Court
- 14. Hamlet Cook's Garage (NC)
- 15. Gas Tank
- 16. Shed (C)
- 17. Outhouse (C)
- 18. Icehouse (C)
- 19. Ranch House (C)
- 20. Kiddies Cabin (C)
- 21. Shed (NC)
- 22. Greenhouse (C)
- 23. Garage (C)
- 24. Chicken Coop (C)
- 25. Earlier Post Office (non Bath Bilty) (C)
- 26. Tent Sleeping House (C)
- 27. Storage Shed (C)
- 28. Storage Shed Addition (C)
- 29. Small Shed (C)
- 30. Hand Pump
- 31. John Cook's Closets Cabin (C)
- 32. Later Post Office (C)
- 33. Shed (C)
- 34. Fenced Area
- 35. Shed (NC)
- 36. "Cake" Dispenser
- 37. Lawn and Garden (C)
- 38. Picnic Area (C)

Sources

Existing conditions and building locations from Brenda Williman, QEA, Field Investigations, April 2007 and Gail Evans-Hatch, Field Investigations, March 2007.
 Red Cloud Campsites locations from the NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory (revised 2003)

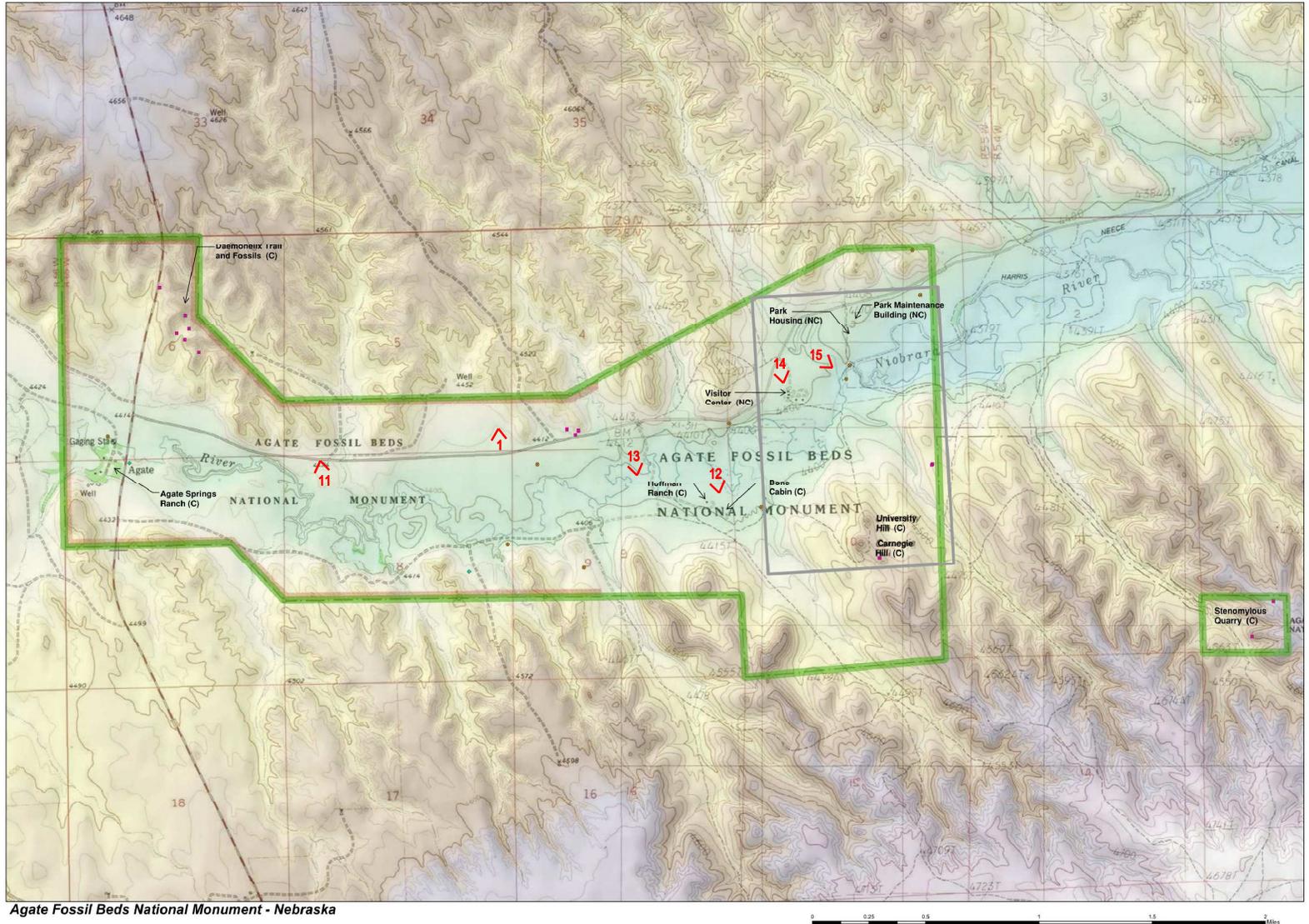


Agate Spring Ranch Site Map
 Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Legend

(C) = Contributing
(NC) = Non-Contributing

See Site Map
for Agate
Springs Ranch



Agate Fossil Beds National Monument - Nebraska

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument Overview

- Added Fossil Site
- Historic Site
- Misc

Legend



Overview
Map 1 of 1

NPS Park Atlas

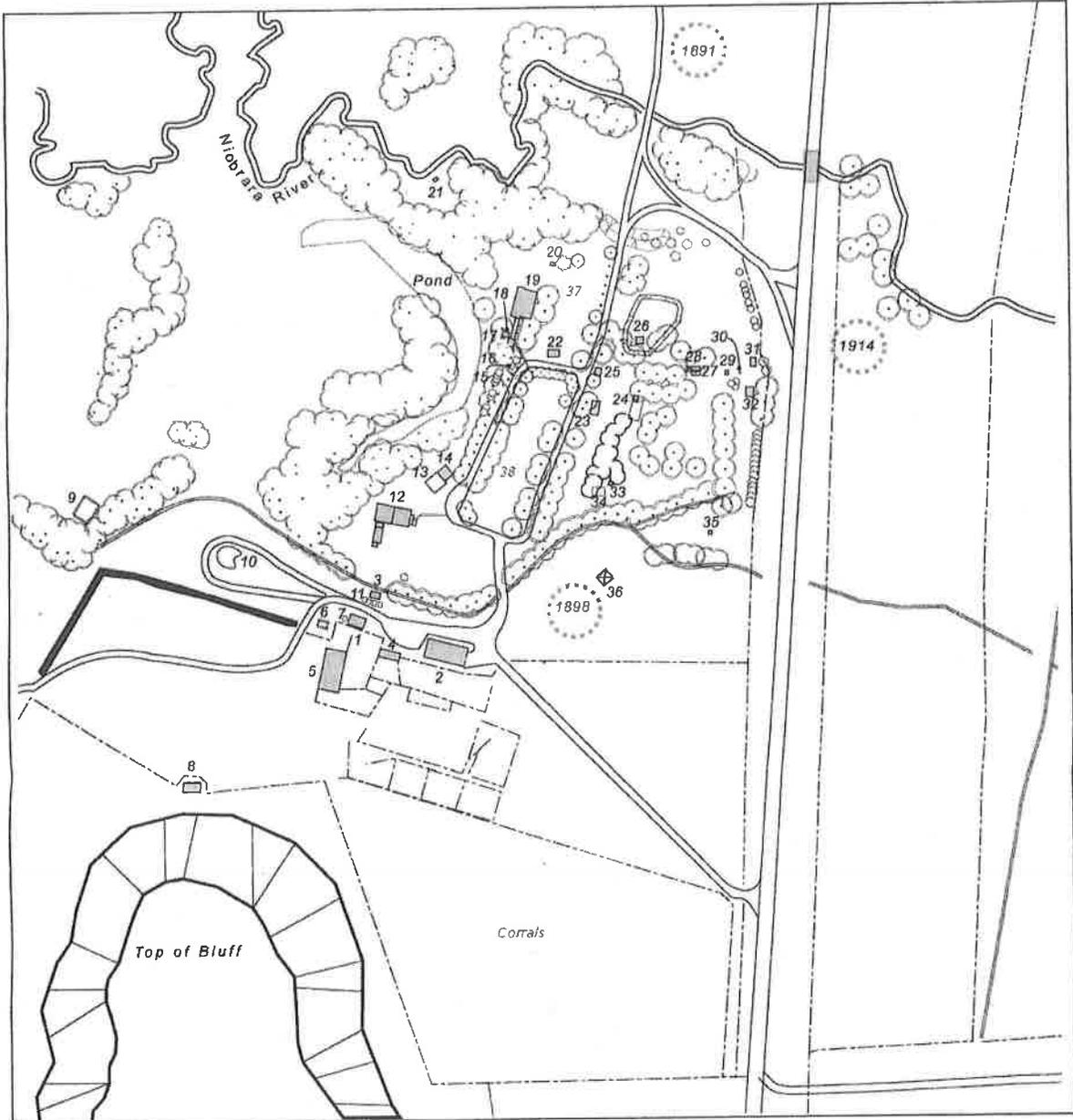
National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

Produced by: Midwest Region Geospatial Support Center

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N

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Path: C:\GPO\GMP\GPO_ParkAtlas\AFDO_ParkAtlas.mxd



C = Contributing
 IIC = Non-contributing

Legend

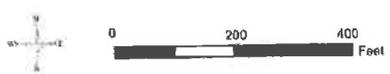
- Building
- Ruin or Remnant of Building
- Farm Drive
- Irrigation Ditch (C)
- Tree Grove (C)
- Shrubs (C)
- Fence
- Niobrara River
- Wood Pile
- Pond
- Bridge (C)
- Elevated Landform
- Mixed Understory Vegetation
- Red Cloud Campsite (C) (approx. locations)

Key

1. Barn/Shed (C)
2. Aluminum Vehicle Storage (IIC)
3. Shed (IIC)
4. Shed (IIC)
5. Shed (IIC)
6. Chicken House Ruins
7. Diesel Tank
8. Ruin of Shed
9. Spring House Ruin
10. Root Cellar
11. Raised Tanks
12. Bunkhouse (C)
13. Concrete Basketball Court
14. Harold Cook's Garage (IIC)
15. Gas Tank
16. Shed (C)
17. Outhouse (C)
18. Icehouse (C)
19. Ranch House (C)
20. Kiddies Cabin (C)
21. Shed (IIC)
22. Greenhouse (C)
23. Garage (C)
24. Chicken Coop (C)
25. Earlier Post Office (now Bath Biffy)(C)
26. Tent Sleeping House (C)
27. Storage Shed (C)
28. Storage Shed Addition (C)
29. Small Shed (C)
30. Hand Pump
31. John Cook's Claim Cabin (C)
32. Later Post Office (C)
33. Shed (C)
34. Fenced Area
35. Shed (IIC)
36. "Cake" Dispenser
37. Lawn and Garden (C)
38. Picnic Area (C)

Sources

Existing conditions and building locations from: Brenda Williman, OEA, Field Investigations, April 2007 and Galt Evans-Hatch, Field Investigations, March 2007.
 Red Cloud Campsites locations from the NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory (revised 2003)



Agate Spring Ranch Site Map
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

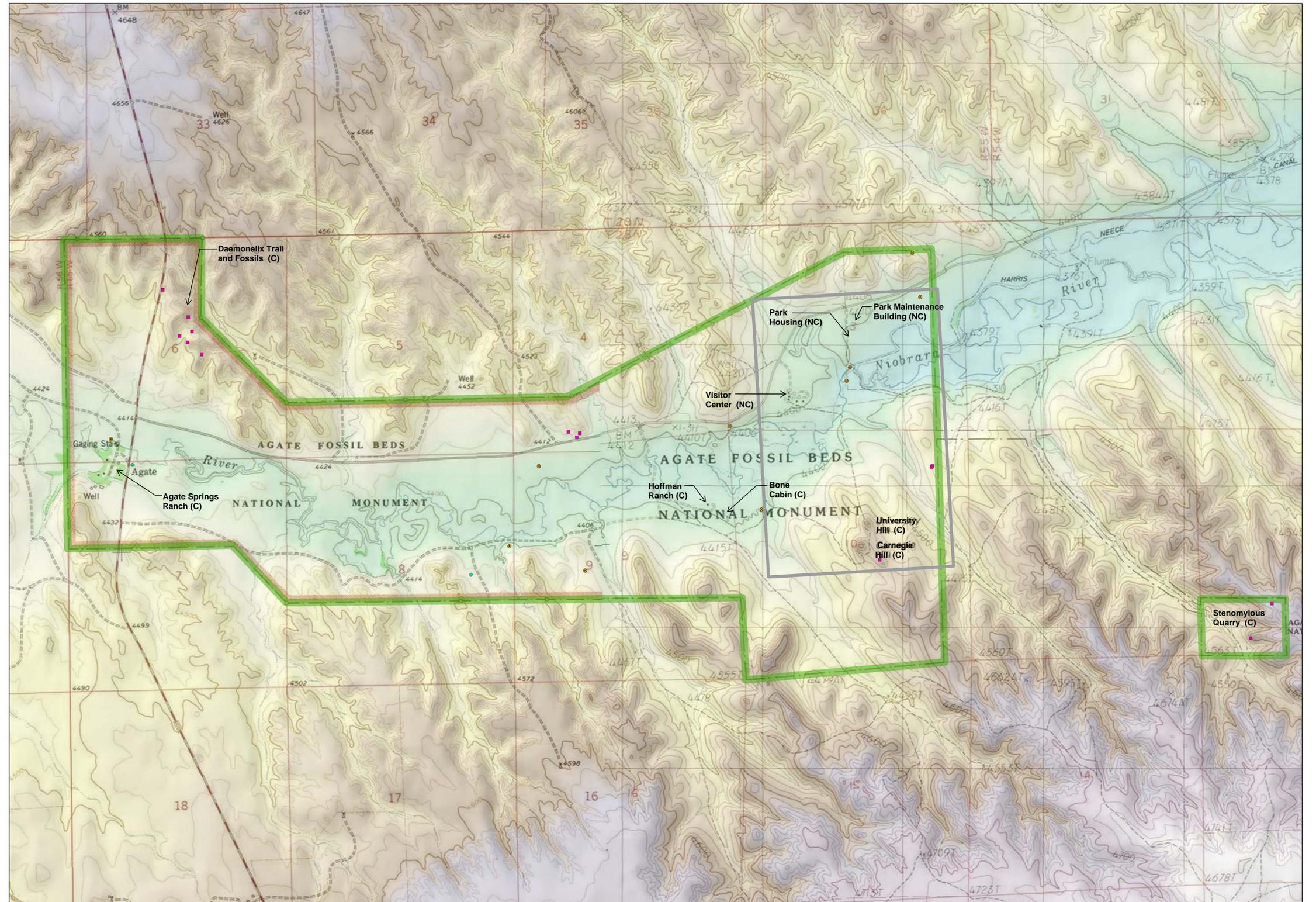
Section number _____ Page _____

A map has been redacted from this property file.

Legend

(C) = Contributing
(NC) = Non-Contributing

See Site Map
for Agate
Springs Ranch



Agate Fossil Beds National Monument - Nebraska



Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Overview

- Added Fossil Site
- Historic Site
- Misc

Legend



Overview
Map 1 of 1

NPS Park Atlas

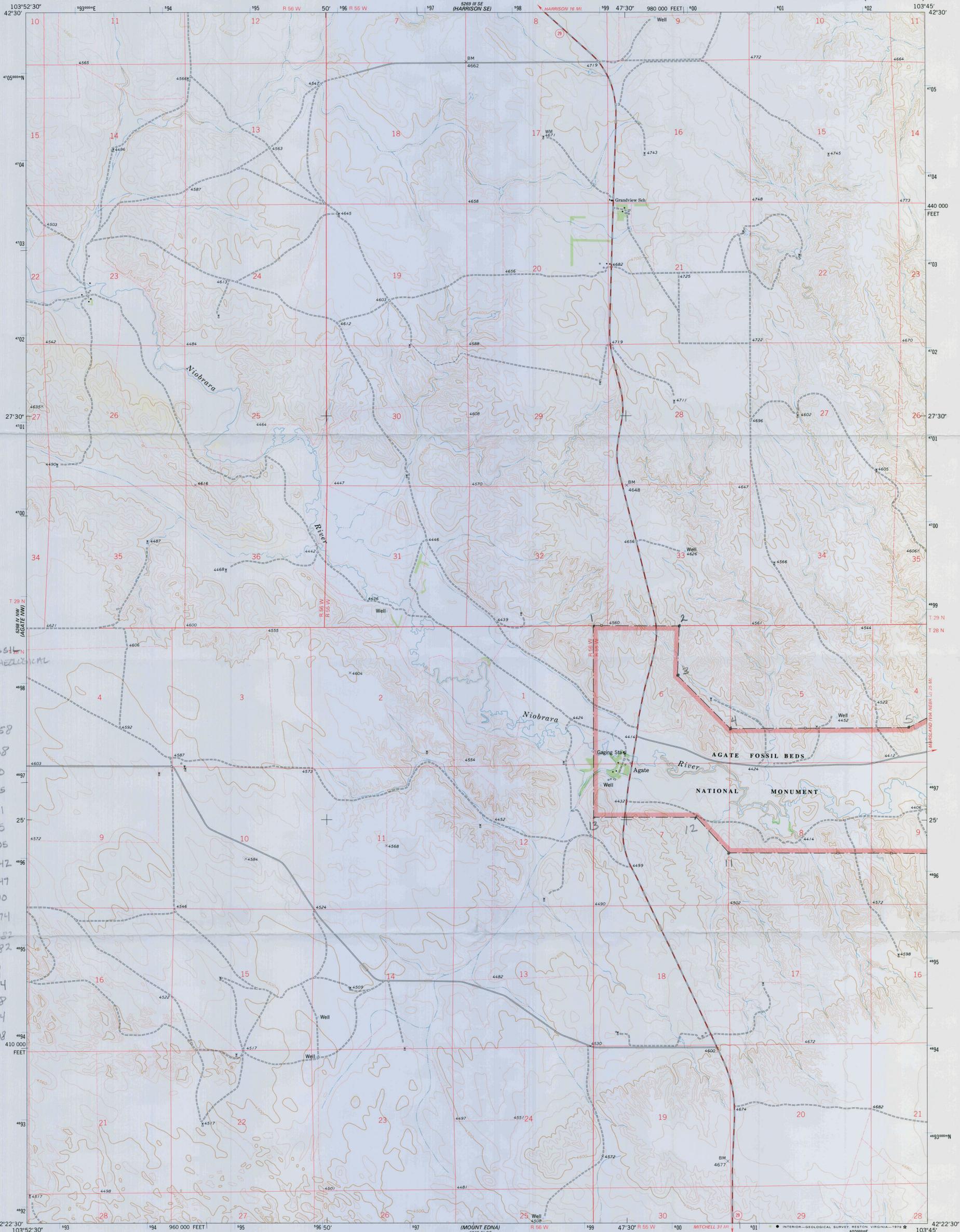
National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

Produced by: Midwest Region Geospatial Support Center

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N

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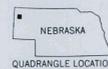
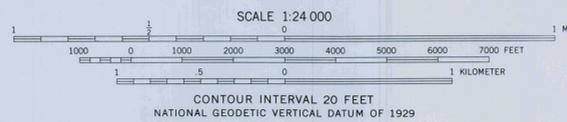
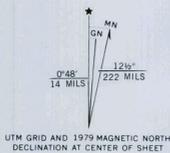
AGATE SPRINGS FOSSIL BEDS
HEDRIG & ARCHER
DISTRICT
ZONE 13

E	N
1. 599000	4698758
2. 599976	4698758
3. 599976	4698190
4. 600580	4697535
5. 602011	4697041
6. 604564	4698655
7. 605108	4698695
8. 605256	4695742
9. 603849	4695647
10. 603817	4696190
11. 600568	4696174
12. 000155	4696532
13. 599000	4696582

STENOMYLUS QUARRY

14. 607143	4696214
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17. 607054	4695798

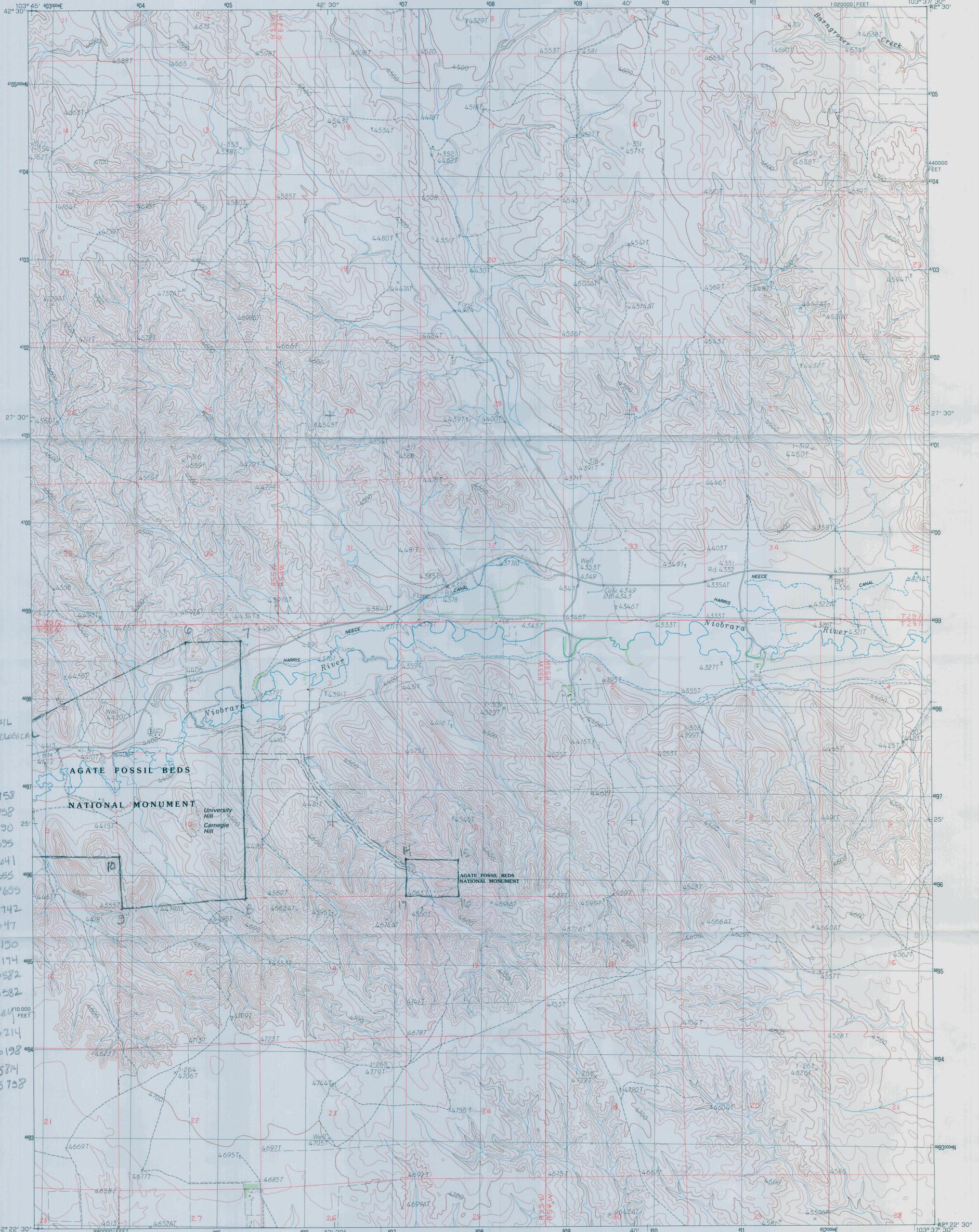
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1973. Field checked 1974. Map edited 1979
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Nebraska
coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 13, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

AGATE, NEBR.
N4222.5-W10345/7.5
1979

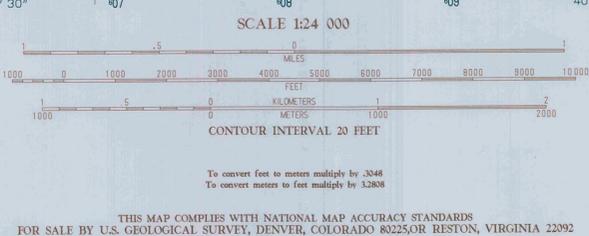


AGATE SPRINGS FOSSIL
HILLS HISTORIC & ARCHEOLOGICAL
DISTRICT
EONE 13

E	N
1. 599000	4698758
2. 599976	4698758
3. 599976	4698190
4. 600580	4697595
5. 602011	4697641
6. 604564	4698655
7. 605168	4698695
8. 605256	4695742
9. 603849	4695647
10. 603817	4696150
11. 600568	4696174
12. 600153	4696582
13. 599000	4696582
STENOMYLUS QUARRY	
14. 607149	4696214
15. 607709	4696198
16. 607710	4695814
17. 607054	4695798

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
CONTROL BY USGS AND NOS/NOAA
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1975
FIELD CHECKED 1981. MAP EDITED 1983
PROJECTION LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC
GRID: INWADETER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR ZONE 19
10000000 STATE GRID TICKS NEBRASKA, NORTH ZONE
UTM GRID DECLINATION 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 0°59' EAST
VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,
move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks
(6 meters north and 43 meters east)
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any
Federal and State Reservations shown on this map

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original
manuscript drawings. Infor-
mation shown as of date of
field check.



ROAD LEGEND

Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			1 Harrison SE				
			2 Kyle Creek				
			3 Glen				
			4 Agate				
			5 Whistle Creek NE				
			6 Mount Eden				
			7 Whistle Creek SW				
			8 Whistle Creek SE				

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

WHISTLE CREEK NW, NEBRASKA
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983
42103-D6-TF-024





























