

## Where to Draw the Line: The Truth about Linears as we Know It

The following is a summary of how to document linear properties. Keep in mind that the purpose of your survey will dictate how you look at and record linears. Linear properties can be historic districts or rural historic landscapes as well as a linear property. While linears as districts or landscapes is a fascinating subject in its own right, this paper is focusing on how to document linear properties for the purposes of 106 survey.

**Definition:** Linears are that class of resource where the length greatly exceeds its width; most often it is not visible in its entirety from any one vantage point; of human design, construction, enhancement, and/or use. Examples include highways and roads, ditches and canals, railroad or trolley tracks, trails, fences, transmission lines, pipelines, retaining walls, berms and tramways.

**Numbering:** Each unique linear resource gets a root number (or standard Smithsonian trinomial) for its entirety in any given county. Portions of a linear resource are assigned point numbers of the root number (e.g., 5GS.2001.10), appropriate to the county in which they are located. Segments within existing segments get a new point number. Segments that fully encompass an existing segment may retain the point number of the segment they subsume.

**Recording:** Most linear segments need to be recorded on a Management Data Form (MDF) with an accompanying Linear Component Form (LCF). It is very rare that a Re-Visitation form is appropriate. The only instance is when the portion that you are recording is exactly the same length as the portion previously recorded.

**Determination of Eligibility:** If the entire linear resource is not surveyed, for the purposes of 106, it is considered to be eligible to the National Register. Segments are to be evaluated with that in mind, and can either support, or not support, the eligibility of the entire linear resource.

**Assessment of Effects:** As a linear resource is one historic property, project effects need to be assessed for the entire resource, not just the segment that is being recorded. Most likely, if the segment does not support the eligibility of the entire resource, the effect on the entire resource will not be adverse. If a segment that supports the eligibility of the entire resource is being affected, then the effect to the entire resource may be adverse.

**Exceptions:** It is important to remember that the recording of linear resources will **always** have exceptions. As a property, they are not very black and white. The goal is to collect enough information on the resource in order to assess its significance and integrity. We try to do this in as consistent a manner as possible (using point numbers for segments, etc.). If you are having difficulties figuring out how you should record a linear property, please check with the lead agency for which you are working. They will help you though this.

**Brief History of Linear Recordations:** Linear resources have been recorded/evaluated in many ways. Each of these ways had its own lexicon for determining eligibility. Initially segments of linear resources were thought to be eligible or not eligible in their own right. This morphed in to segments being evaluated as contributing or non-contributing. Then in the mid 2000's the Park Service educated OAHF on how linears are really structures and so we ought not to be evaluating segments as contributing or non-contributing or eligible or not eligible. This would be akin to saying the windows or doors of an eligible structure were contributing or non-contributing or eligible or not eligible. Thus the verbiage,

retains sufficient integrity to support the eligibility of the entire linear resource, was born on February 7, 2009.

This brief history was intended to help you evaluate what you may see in Compass. While we at OAHP try to clean up the erroneous assessments of linear segments when we run across them, there are bound to be many that we will never run across in the course of our work. If you run across a confusing or erroneous assessment associated with a linear segment, do not hesitate to contact OAHP and report it.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. If I'm recording a segment within a segment why can't I use the same number and just fill out a re-visitation form?

A: Let's assume that Company A is recording 30-m of a 3,000-m long road that was previously determined to be a supporting segment of the entire linear resource. The recorders find that the entire 30-m long segment within their project ROW was destroyed sometime after the recording of the 3,000-m segment, done by Company B. Company A now recommends that this segment be considered non-supporting. If Company A were to reuse 5GS.2001.10, does this really address the eligibility of what was originally recorded by Company B? No, it does not. Therefore, a new segment number needs to be assigned and a new Management Data Form and Linear Component form need to be completed for the 30-m segment.

2. How long must a linear resource segment be in order to support the eligibility of the entire linear resource?

A: With linear segments, size doesn't matter. As long as a linear segment maintains integrity so that it conveys the significance of the entire linear, any length will do.

3. Do I have to fill out a form for the entire resource if I am only recording a segment?

A: No, you don't have to.

4. Do I have to record a linear resource beyond the project boundaries?

A: You may need/want to research and evaluate a linear resource beyond project boundaries, but actual field recordation can be limited to the segment in the project area.

5. Can I use the same segment number if I am extending the length of an existing segment?

A: Yes you may, as long as the segment you are recording completely encompasses the existing segment number, or if it is an extension on either end. As you are changing the boundary of the segment, however, a new Management Data Form and Linear Component Form need to be completed.

6. My APE crosses the same ditch 42 times. Really do I have to get 42 segment numbers, complete 42 MDFs and 42 LCFs?

A: No. You may choose to do the background research on the ditch and record either the entire resource, the entire resource within a given county, or a longer segment that encompasses the 42 crossings within your APE. This involves an intensive level survey of the segment that focuses a higher level of attention on the segments within the APE, but also includes a general description or representative assessment of the segments that extend outside of the APE. It also enables you to obtain either the root number for that resource overall or within a given county, or a single segment number. In any of these cases, you need submit only 1 MDF and accompanying LCF.

**Helpful Resources:**

[\*Digging the Old West: How Dams and Ditches Constructed an American Landscape\*](#)

By Karmen Lee Franklin

[\*Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System\*](#)

2002 - Associated Cultural Resource Experts

*Historic Context for Irrigation and Water Supply Ditches and Canals in Colorado*

By Michael Holleran – Copy on file at OAHP, 1200 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203

Colorado Water Conservation Board/Division of Water Resources Database

<http://cdss.state.co.us/onlineTools/pages/waterrights.aspx>

[\*Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail, 1821-1880\*](#)

[\*Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948\*](#)