

**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 determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name La Junta City Park

other names/site number 5OT.937

2. Location

street & number bounded by Colorado and Park Avenues and 10th and 14th Streets [N/A] not for publication

city or town La Junta [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Otero code 89 zip code 81050

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- removed from the
National Register
- other, explain
[] See continuation sheet.

La Junta City Park
Name of Property

Otero County, Colorado
County/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 count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

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

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape / park
Recreation and Culture / outdoor recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape / park
Recreation and Culture / outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements
Other: WPA Rustic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone
walls Sandstone

roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

La Junta City Park
Name of Property

Otero County, Colorado
County/State

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Entertainment/Recreation
Landscape Architecture

Periods of Significance
1933 - 1956

Significant Dates
1933
1941

Significant Person(s)
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Civil Works Administration
Works Progress Administration

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
Colorado Historical Society

La Junta City Park
Name of Property

Otero County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- | | | | | |
|----|------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| 1. | 13 | 627824 | 4204259 | (NAD 27) |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 2. | 13 | 628000 | 4204262 | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 3. | 13 | 628003 | 4203875 | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 4. | 13 | 627833 | 4203874 | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | [] See continuation sheet |

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Abigail Christman, Survey Coordinator (for property owner)
organization Colorado Preservation, Inc. date 9/2006
street & number 333 West Colfax Avenue, Suite 300 telephone 303-893-4260
city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80204

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name City of La Junta (Rick Klein, City Manager)
street & number 601 Colorado Avenue telephone 719-384-5991
city or town La Junta state Colorado zip code 81050

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. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

DESCRIPTION

The La Junta City Park is rectangular in plan, occupying four city blocks in the middle of La Junta's historic residential section. The overall dimensions of the park are 1313' by 591'. The park is naturalistic in design, with trees scattered across open, level lawns. The park is simple without any elaborate landscaping plans, reflecting the functionality of the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA). The primary visual features of the park are a lake in the northwest corner and the Rustic stonework found throughout the park. The WPA walls, benches, caretaker's house, and restrooms are all constructed of multi-hued sandstone slabs laid in random courses with beaded grapevine joints.

The park is bordered by 10th Street, Park Avenue, 14th Street and Colorado Avenue (the primary north-south road in La Junta). Santa Fe Avenue dead-ends at the northern park boundary and begins again south of the park. 12th Street runs through the park, dividing it into north and south sections. At the center of the park 12th Street becomes a circular drive around a gazebo. Another paved path enters the park at the northeastern corner of the park and ends at the circle; this was once a vehicular drive but with the addition of stone planters the entrance has been narrowed, converting it to a pedestrian path. A rustic stone wall encloses the park and borders the drives and paths running through the park.

The park combines passive and active recreation. In the northern portion of the park the focus is on passive recreation, with views of the lake and picnic shelters. Facilities for active recreation, including basketball courts, tennis courts, a playground, and a skate park are all clustered in the southern portion of the park. Five rustic stone benches are scattered along the west side of the park. A WPA-constructed caretaker's house and bathroom buildings are located on the east side of the park.

There are twenty-two resources within the La Junta City Park of which 13 are contributing and 8 are noncontributing. The park site, including the lake, lawns, trees, and circulation plan is considered as one resource. Impermanent resources, such as the movable metal picnic tables scattered throughout the park, are not included in the count.

Contributing Resources

La Junta City Park Site, 1933-1941. The La Junta City Park site is counted as one contributing site, with integral or smaller park elements considered as features of the site and not included in the count of contributing and noncontributing resources. Though land for the La Junta City Park was donated in 1905, the park as it exists today is primarily the work of the CWA and WPA, which carried out a series of improvement projects in the park from 1933 to 1941. The focus of the CWA project was improving drainage in the park. The WPA carried out a more extensive rebuilding and landscaping of the park which included laying drives, planting trees, building the lake, and constructing rustic stone walls and buildings.

The park has a rectangular plan and encompasses 16.5 acres. The character of the landscape is of a flat lawn dotted with shady trees. Deciduous trees are scattered throughout the park and are also arranged linearly along the stone walls in many locations. The mature trees are predominantly English and Chinese Elm. A lake, created by the WPA, is located in the northwest corner of the park. The banks are riprapped, which was part of the original WPA design. The lake is roughly 400' long and 100' wide. According to the WPA files and newspaper accounts, the WPA plans originally called for four lakes in the park. After a disastrous flood in 1937, two of the lakes were combined into a single lake. No

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 2

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

mention is made of the other two lakes, presumably they were severely damaged in the flood and the WPA decided to fill them in.

A vehicular asphalt drive runs east-west through the middle of the park, circling around a gazebo. A similar paved drive branches off from the circle and runs to the northeast corner of the park, but this drive has been closed to vehicular traffic. These circulation paths are original. A short drive leading southwest from the circle to a parking area adjacent to recreational facilities is a later addition. These are the only circulation paths through the parks; there are no separate sidewalks for pedestrians.

Caretaker's House, 1936-1941 (Photographs 10-12). The construction of a caretaker's house was part of a WPA project proposed in 1935. Work on this project began in May 1936. Work in the park was delayed by a severe flood in 1937, which damaged much of the work to date. In 1938, an application for another WPA project in the park was approved and the completion of the caretaker's house was listed among the project tasks. This project was completed in 1941.

The caretaker's house faces east onto Colorado Avenue. It is in the Rustic Style with elements of the Pueblo Revival Style incorporated into the design. The Rustic Style is most evident in the building's stone construction. The walls are composed of red, tan, and buff slabs of sandstone, laid randomly with beaded grapevine mortar joints. The mortar at the entry of the caretaker's house was tinted black. The overall quality of the masonry work on the caretaker's house is more polished than the masonry work found on the walls and benches in the park. This is likely due to a combination of factors including the use of skilled masons on the buildings and untrained workers on the walls and benches. Also the caretaker's house was constructed later in the project and the men had likely gained more experience with the stonework by that time. Elements of the Pueblo Revival style include wood vigas and the flat roof surrounded by crenellated parapet walls (although the original roof design has been partially obscured by the later side-gable roof).

The caretaker's house is 34' x 24'. The building rests on a foundation of ashlar blocks. The facade is symmetrical with the centered front entry recessed within a round-arch opening. A flagstone path leads east from the entrance to an opening in the masonry wall surrounding the park. Two, wide, semi-circular steps constructed of cast-in-place concrete lead up to the front entry. The steps are lined with vertically placed textured and tinted concrete blocks. These blocks also line the arched entry opening. Five wood vigas are located on either side of the entrance. The original roof was flat, surrounded by a crenellated parapet wall. Flat blocks of tinted concrete form the coping of the parapets. A shallow-pitched, side-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles has been placed over the historical flat roof around 1970, but the crenellated parapet wall is intact beneath it.

The window openings have stone sills and concrete lintels. The windows are six-over-one, double-hung with wood frames. The aluminum-frame storm coverings have been placed over the windows. There are six windows on the facade, arranged in two groups of three. There are also single windows placed on either side of the recessed entry. The house also retains its original wooden doors, frames, and hardware. On the south wall, there are four windows. Two of the windows are paired. A masonry chimney is located between the other two windows. There are six windows on the west (rear) wall, arranged in a group of three, a pair, and a single window. There is also one small basement window. There are 12 wood vigas above the windows. A door is located at the center of the west wall. A flat-roofed porch supported by wood posts was added to the rear sometime before 1985. On the north wall, there are six windows arranged in groups of three.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 3

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

On the interior, the wooden beams of the vigas extend across the ceiling. Between the vigas, the plaster ceiling has been vaulted. A stone fireplace is located in the living room. The original hardwood floors are intact though they have been covered with vinyl flooring in the kitchen and carpet in the living room. The house is currently used as office space for the La Junta parks department.

Stone restroom buildings (2), 1936-1941 (Photographs 13-15). Located to the north of the caretaker's house, the two restroom buildings appear to have been constructed concurrently with the caretaker's house. The first mention of the restrooms in the project files is in the second WPA application. However, the restrooms are listed along with the caretaker's house as projects to be completed, indicating that work had already begun under the first WPA project at the park. The restroom buildings are also very similar in appearance to the caretaker's house, designed in the Rustic Style with elements of the Pueblo Revival Style. Like the caretaker's house, the overall quality of the masonry work on the caretaker's house is more polished than the masonry work on the walls and benches.

The restroom buildings are 24' x 20'. The buildings rest on a foundation of ashlar blocks. Like the caretaker's house, the restrooms' walls are composed of red, tan, and buff slabs of sandstone, laid randomly with a beaded grapevine mortar joint. Non-original, metal doors are centered on the south walls of the restroom buildings. Flagstone paths lead from the restrooms to the paved drive located to the west. Small window openings are located on either side of the door; the windows are metal-framed and covered with 3 horizontal metal bars. The window openings have been boarded up from the interior. Two windows are located on the west and east sides of the restrooms. There are also seven wood vigas. The north walls of the restroom buildings are blank, with no openings except for two drainage spouts. The roof is flat and surrounded by a crenellated parapet wall. Flat blocks of tinted concrete form the coping of the parapets. These buildings are currently used for storage.

Stone walls, 1936-1941 (Photographs 1-3, 5-6, 9-10, 13). The construction of stone walls was part of the first WPA project for the park, proposed in 1935 and begun in 1936. The second park project, approved in 1938 and completed in 1941, also included the construction stone walls. Low stone walls run along the entire perimeter of the park and border the paved drives. Roughly 6,000 linear feet of stone walls were constructed by the WPA. The Rustic Style walls are constructed of tan and buff colored sandstone slabs, laid randomly with beaded grapevine mortar joints. The walls are topped with concrete slab coping with rounded edges that resembles the beaded mortar joints. The walls slope upwards at openings. The walls do not include the red hued stones used for the park buildings. In a few locations, the continuous slab walls are interrupted by posts composed of rows of cobblestones held together with heavy mortar and capped with concrete. These posts rise several inches above the slab wall. The quality of masonry work varies greatly within the park, with some sections appearing more polished with precise mortar joints and carefully arranged stone slabs, and other sections much rougher. This is reflective of the fact that most of the work was done by laborers with no masonry experience who were learning on the job.

Stone benches (5), 1936-1941 (Photograph 8). The exact construction date of the benches is not clear. The WPA project applications do not specifically mention the construction of the benches. The benches are arranged linearly along the western wall of the park, so they may have been constructed at the same time as the wall. Or they may have been constructed as part of the picnic facilities created by the WPA. There are five stone benches located in the west side of the park. Like the stone buildings and wall, the Rustic Style benches are constructed of sandstone slabs laid randomly. However, the quality of the stonework is less professional than that of other park structures, and the benches lack the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 4

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

distinctive beaded mortar joints used elsewhere. The stones are not as carefully fit together, and smaller stones and heavy mortar are used to fill the spaces between the larger slabs. In many places, the mortar is tinted pink. The seats of the benches are rectangular with a slab of concrete covering a stone base. The bench seats are designed to hold 3 to 4 people. The backs of four of the benches are curved, the fifth is rectangular. Concrete coping covers the top of the bench backs.

Gazebo, before 1941 (Photograph 9). The gazebo is located near the center of the park; 12th Street forms a circle around the gazebo. The exact construction date of the gazebo is not know. Appearing in a WPA photograph of the park from the 1930s, the gazebo either predates the WPA work or was constructed by the WPA. According to a project proposal, the WPA planned to replace a gazebo that was already in the park, but no information confirming whether this was done has been found. However, the WPA-constructed wall encircling the gazebo indicates that it was clearly part of the WPA plan for the park.

The gazebo is square in plan, and measures approximately 15' x 15'. The open platform is constructed of concrete blocks and enclosed by a pipe railing. A wood door is located on the south side of the base. Concrete stairs are located on the north side of the gazebo. Square wooden posts resting on the four corners of the platform support a shingled, pyramidal, hipped roof. The ceiling is wood. The platform, posts, ceiling and pipe railing have all been painted a pinkish beige color.

Tennis courts, 1938-1941 (Photograph 4). Three tennis courts were constructed as part of the second WPA project at the park. Though the courts have been resurfaced since then, they are considered contributing since they were part of the original WPA plan for the park. The tennis courts are part of a cluster of active recreational facilities located just south of 12th Street. A chain link fence surrounds the tennis courts. Lights on tall metal poles provide illumination for the courts at night.

Boy Scout Monument, 1951 (Photograph 20). This monument was constructed by local Boy Scouts in 1951. Though it is not associated with the CWA and WPA work in the park, it was constructed during the period of significance. The monument consists of a star-shaped stone base on which a stone pedestal with an 8'-4" copper replica of the Statue of Liberty rests. The stone work is designed to resemble the WPA work in the park. The bronze plaque on the base of the monument reads: "With the faith and courage of their forefathers who made possible the freedom of these United States, the Boy Scouts of America dedicate this copy of the Statue of Liberty as a pledge of everlasting fidelity and loyalty. The Crusade to Strengthen Liberty, 1951."

Noncontributing Resources

The following resources are non-contributing due to their construction after the period of significance.

Basketball Courts, 1990. Two concrete half-court basketball courts are located on the east side of the park, between 12th Street and the tennis courts. It is part of a cluster of active recreational facilities located just south of 12th Street. The courts measure roughly 50' x 80'.

Maintenance Building, 1990 (Photograph 19). A frame maintenance building sheathed in vinyl siding is located just south of the house. It has a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. A flat-roofed, concrete-block shed is attached to the west wall of the maintenance building. The west and south walls of the shed are faced with rustic stonework resembling the WPA work, but rougher. The mortar joints are sloppy without the beading used in the WPA work. The maintenance building was constructed in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 5

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

1990 to provide storage for equipment of the Parks and Recreation Department. Together, the gabled frame structure and attached concrete-block shed measure roughly 25'x 35'.

Restroom, 1994 (Photograph 17). A small, concrete-block restroom building is located near the middle of the park, just south of 12th Street. The blocks are a pinkish-brown color. The rectangular-plan building rests on a concrete foundation and is covered by a gabled, standing-seam metal roof. Two round, metal pipes for ventilation are located on the south side of the building. Entrances are located on the west and east sides of the building. The building measures roughly 8'x 20'.

Picnic Shelters (3), 1996 (Photograph 16). Three picnic shelters are located in the park. One is on the southern end of the park, another on the western side near 12th Street, and one is located just east of the lake. The shelters are six-sided and consist of pyramidal hipped roofs supported by six square metal posts that rest on concrete pads. The roofs are covered with red asphalt shingles designed to resemble clay tiles. The shelters at the south and west of the park are smaller with each side measuring roughly 10'. A larger shelter (measuring roughly 20' per side) is located on the east side of the lake.

Playground, 1999 (Photograph 18). A playground is located on the west side of the park, northwest of the skate park. It is part of a cluster of active recreational facilities located just south of 12th Street. According to the application files, the first WPA project in the park (1936-1938) included the installation of playground equipment. It is not known when this equipment was removed. The existing playground, installed in 1999, is non-contributing since the design of the equipment is very different from any equipment that would have been placed by the WPA. It consists of a collection of brightly colored plastic and metal slides, tunnels, and other play equipment. The play equipment is located on a square lot filled with sand, measuring roughly 75' x 75'. A concrete border encloses the lot.

Skate Park, 2003 (Photograph 4). A skate park is located west of the tennis courts and southeast of the playground. It is part of a cluster of active recreational facilities located just south of 12th Street. The skate park measures roughly 100' x 120'. This collection of concrete ramps for skate boarding is sunken into the ground, giving it a low profile within the park.

Integrity

Since no landscape plan for the park survives and the WPA files and local newspaper articles are vague in their descriptions of the work, it is difficult to compare the original park plan to the current park. Another challenge is that WPA projects often evolved during construction, so that what was proposed in the project application did not always match the finished project. There were several reasons for this including the need to do more or less depending on how many men needed relief work and a changing view of what would work best on the site once a project was underway. There is evidence of historic features that have not survived. The application for the first WPA project in the park includes two rustic bridges in the scope of work. It is not known whether these were ever completed; they may have been damaged or destroyed in the flood of 1937. When the La Junta City Park project was featured in *The WPA Worker*, a stone fireplace in the shape of a five-pointed star was pictured, part of the park's picnic facilities. The article also mentioned the construction of concrete benches and tables in the park. None of these survive. However, the surviving WPA structures, including the stone walls, stone benches, caretaker's house, and restrooms, clearly represent the majority of the WPA work in the park. Visually, the stone walls enclosing the park are the dominant feature. The stone work retains a high degree of integrity. The only significant modification was the addition of stone planters at the northeast corner in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 6

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

the 1970s to block vehicular access to the park via this road. The planters were constructed with masonry techniques similar to the WPA in order to blend with the existing stone work.

New construction within the park is mostly functional, unobtrusive, and part of the park's evolving use. The new active recreation facilities (the playground, skate park, and basketball courts) have all been grouped together near the historic tennis courts, minimizing their impact on the other areas of the park where passive recreation is emphasized. The recently constructed skate park is the largest intrusion in the park, but due to its low profile, it is not visible from the northern section of the park. All of the new construction within the park (picnic shelters, playground, skate park, basketball courts, maintenance building, and restroom) is compatible with the WPA plan to create a functional and welcoming public park with a mix of active and passive recreation.

Overall, the La Junta City Park has a high degree of integrity in all areas. The overall park plan retains integrity in topography, land use, circulation system, and vistas. The mature vegetation is historic; loss of other vegetation is typical of changes over time with historic landscapes. The most significant design feature of the park is its masonry craftsmanship and the modern additions to the park do not affect the integrity of these stone features.

List of Resources within the District

Resource	Year Built	Resource Type	Contributing Status
Park	1933-1941	Site	Contributing
Caretaker's House	1936-1941	Building	Contributing
Restrooms (2)	1936-1941	Building	Contributing
Stone walls	1936-1941	Structure	Contributing
Stone benches (5)	1936-1941	Structure	Contributing
Gazebo	Before 1941	Structure	Contributing
Tennis Courts	1938-1941	Structure	Contributing
Boy Scout Monument	1951	Object	Contributing
Basketball Courts	1990	Structure	Non-contributing
Skate Park	2003	Structure	Non-contributing
Playground	1999	Structure	Non-contributing
Picnic Shelters (3)	1996	Structure	Non-contributing
Restroom	1994	Building	Non-contributing
Maintenance Building	1990	Building	Non-contributing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 7

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

SIGNIFICANCE

La Junta City Park, constructed between 1933 and 1941 under the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA), is being nominated under the *New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). La Junta City Park meets the registration requirements of one property type delineated in the MPDF—Recreational & Cultural Resources (subtype: Parks).

La Junta City Park meets Criterion A for its significance in the area of Social History for its association with the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA). New Deal built resources in eastern Colorado are significant for their association with President Franklin Roosevelt's legislative agenda to rescue the United States from the Great Depression. This agenda included the creation of an unprecedented number of policies, programs, and agencies to provide relief, employment, conserve natural resources, and assist in construction of public works—all with the greater goal of stimulating the devastated economy. Constructed by the CWA and the WPA over 9 years, La Junta City Park presents an important record of the federal relief programs administered in eastern Colorado during the Great Depression. Although all of Colorado was affected by the dire economic conditions of the 1930s, the agricultural-based economy of the Eastern Plains was especially hard hit due to the drought conditions that led to the Dust Bowl. The public works jobs helped families as well as communities survive during the Depression years, and constructed infrastructure that would not have otherwise been built. The New Deal construction programs emphasized projects providing civic, educational, and health benefits for a community, and a large number of projects were related to recreation, athletics, and health. During the difficult times of the Depression, New Deal agencies also recognized the psychological benefits of recreational and cultural activities. Under the CWA and WPA, life in La Junta was enhanced through the conversion of an underutilized and poorly drained park into a welcoming space that was a source of pride for the community.

La Junta City Park also meets Criterion A for its significance in the area of Entertainment / Recreation. The CWA and WPA park projects provided La Junta citizens with a space for outdoor recreation. La Junta City Park is significant as the primary park for the city of La Junta. The land for the park had been donated to the city in 1905, but few improvements had been made to the land. The WPA project proposal stated: "The city of La Junta at this time has no playground or recreational center for children. This Park will be equipped with playground equipment when completed and will be used by adults as well as children for picnics, and other recreation." The CWA and WPA improvements provided a vital morale boost to a community suffering during the Depression. According to *The WPA Worker*:

Because of the parks and playgrounds built by the WPA, millions of people who can't afford to belong to country clubs can now swim and play golf, tennis and other healthful outdoor games. . . . Eighty percent of the distressed people whom the WPA must employ are unskilled, yet suited to the building of recreational and sport facilities. That is why a large part of WPA's effort now goes to building and improving parks and playgrounds, swimming pools, gymnasiums and amphitheatres.

From the completion of the WPA project to the present, the park has provided a location for active and passive recreation from playing tennis to picnicking.

The park meets Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as an example of WPA park design influenced by the Rustic Style. The Rustic Style originated with park structures designed for the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 8

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service and emphasized the use of native materials, low building profiles that blended with the landscape, and the adaptation of indigenous or frontier methods of construction. This design philosophy was an ideal fit with the philosophy of the WPA. The WPA used native materials because they were usually the least expensive. For the La Junta City Park, the WPA only had to pay for the labor needed to quarry the stone, thus fitting with their goal to spend as much as possible on labor and as little as possible on materials. Traditional construction methods were used to save the cost of power tools and large machinery and because they provided more employment. Characteristic elements of the Rustic Style present in the park structures include the use of native stone, traditional construction methods, evident hand craftsmanship (such as the grapevine beaded mortar joints), and simple, functional design. The materials and construction methods are reflective of their origin as public works programs designed to be labor intensive. La Junta City Park includes many of the features common in New Deal era parks including naturalistic landscaping, stone walls, water features, caretaker housing, and tennis courts.

The period of significance begins in 1933 with the start of construction of the park as a CWA project and ends in 1956. Although the park remains in active use by La Junta residents, the period of significance ends in 1956 in order to comply with the National Register's fifty year rule. The significant dates of 1933 and 1941 are the beginning of park construction when New Deal employment on the project began and 1941 when the project was completed and could be fully enjoyed by La Junta residents.

Historical Background

The history of the La Junta City Park dates back to 1905 when this parcel of land was sold to the City of La Junta for \$1.00. The land was to be used "for a public park or public pleasure grounds." However, few improvements were made to the land. On November 27, 1933, the Civil Works Administration (CWA) commenced what would become nine years of work to improve the park by federal relief agencies. The CWA was organized in late 1933. It was designed to be a public works program that could put people to work quickly, providing immediate relief to help people through the winter of President Roosevelt's first year in office. Jobs were typically small, since the projects were intended to last only 90 days. Road improvements, flood control, and recreational facilities were popular projects in Colorado.

A 1933 article in the *La Junta Daily Democrat* reported, "As La Junta citizens know seepage in this park has made it next to impossible to grow grass and trees there and provide a park as was originally intended." The work done by the CWA was focused on developing a drainage system, placing drain tile in ditches filled with sand in order to carry off alkali seepage water. The total cost of the project was estimated at \$6211. La Junta city engineer, George E. Hine, supervised the project. The workers laid 8,000 feet of 6-inch tile to assist in the drainage. In addition, the workers also replaced shale with "good soil" around the park's band stand so that grass would grow. The work was originally projected to be completed mid-February 1934. But this was evidently not enough time since a second CWA application was filed at the end of February to continue the project. In early March 1934, the *La Junta Daily Democrat* reported that the drainage work was nearly complete, though there was still much other improvement work that needed to be done in the park.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was the next New Deal agency to take on the improvement of La Junta City Park. Although the early programs of the New Deal had relieved the suffering of some

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 9

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

Americans, it was clear by the end of 1934 that the economic depression and problems of unemployment were not going away. Most New Dealers believed that working was better than the "dole." The Roosevelt administration thus proposed to replace a program of direct relief to the states with a broader relief and recovery program known as the "Second New Deal." Central to this new phase was a work relief program for the unemployed, established as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) on May 6, 1935. The WPA became the major source of public jobs for the unemployed during the latter part of the thirties. Its main goal was to put the unemployed back to work and off of the relief rolls. "Small useful projects" were designed to provide employment for a maximum number of needy "employable" workers in the "shortest time possible."

A WPA project proposal was submitted on August 24, 1935 to rebuild and landscape the park. The planned work included constructing walks, driveways, and walls, rip-rapping four lakes, and creating a picnic area. The landscaping plan called for grading and filling 8 acres of parkland, moving and transplanting 750 trees and shrubs, graveling walks and drives, laying pipe for irrigation, building two "rustic" bridges, and improving the park with new plant life and general gardening. The estimated date of completion was June 1936. The plans were drawn up by "experienced landscape man," Kenneth E. Rice, and again, George E. Hine supervised the project. According to an article in the *La Junta Daily Democrat*, the plans for the park also included a new gazebo and a caretaker's house. The proposal called for a federal contribution of \$37,108.71 and a local contribution of \$4,480.05 from the City of La Junta for a total cost of \$41,588.76. The final adjustment for the project, dated 7 December 1938, was slightly higher with the federal allocation at \$40,339.70, and the sponsor contribution at \$5,395.47.

Although proposed in August 1935, the actual work on the park did not start until mid May 1936. The *La Junta Daily Democrat* reported that "the plans for improvement are very elaborate and if they are all carried out this park will be transformed into one of the most beautiful places in Southern Colorado." Around forty men were put to work when the project started, many of them transferred over from a completed WPA city storm sewer job. The work was interrupted at least twice and took much longer than the originally estimated eight months. In October 1936, a newspaper article reported that the work was resuming after being "stopped on account of men taking up private employment." Presumably, these men took time off for seasonal agricultural employment, which was a common practice.

For the historic structure assessment, an interview was conducted with La Junta resident Ralph Koop who worked on the WPA project. Koop described several of the construction methods used. The stone used in the construction was quarried near Higbee, sixteen miles south of La Junta on Highway 109. The stone was delivered to the park from the quarry in random sizes. The masons chose the stones that roughly fit together and then used a masonry hammer to adjust the fit more closely. For the stone walls, two courses of stone were laid. The flatter sides faced outwards, with the rougher sides adjoining each other inwards. The interior of the wall was then filled with a mix of gravel, loose stone, dried mortar and concrete. The wall was then topped with concrete coping with rounded edges. The amount of concrete used inside the walls was minimized in order to save money. To create the grapevine beading, the masons used a tool made out of a cut piece of pipe with a handle attached. The mortar was five parts sand to one part mortar. Koop recalled that the blocks lining the curved edge of the steps in front of the caretaker's house were constructed of colored concrete. The texture was created by covering the wet concrete in wooden forms with a piece of carpet and then pulling the carpet up and leaving the rough texture produced. After the concrete dried, the edges were struck to create a tooled appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 10

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)



In February 1937, an article in *The WPA Worker*, described the park as “vastly improved.” The new picnic grounds constructed as part of the project were described as accommodating 250 people and were projected to be widely used by community churches, clubs, and other civic groups. Then on “Decoration Day” 1937, now known as Memorial Day, La Junta and the park were hit by a substantial flood. Flood waters flowed down Santa Fe Avenue directly into the park before continuing downtown. The flood put work in the park on hold for over eight months. It also increased the scope of the project since the flood damage had to be repaired in addition to the completion of buildings in the park. The City of La Junta contributed an additional \$500 to the project to help pay for the repairs. Resumption of the project was announced in January, but work did not begin again until March 11, 1938 when 46 WPA workers were transferred from a completed underpass projects.

On July 22, 1938 a second WPA project application was submitted to complete work in the park. The WPA contribution was \$27,908.00 with \$5,030.00 from the City of La Junta for a total of \$32,938.00. The project application once again called for rebuilding and landscaping the park. Projects mentioned in the application include the construction of stone masonry walls, concrete tennis courts, picnic and playground areas, grading and surfacing park drives, installing a sprinkler system, rebuilding four small lakes, and completion of caretaker’s house and rest rooms.

In November 1939 the *La Junta Daily Democrat* reported that the park improvements were well underway. One concrete tennis court was completed and two more would be finished soon. In March 1940 it was announced the laying of pipes through the park was almost completed, so that irrigation could soon begin. Work was also beginning on improving the lakes, which had been drained three months previously. The WPA cleaned out the lakes, making them deeper, and lining the side walls with stone. Deepening the lakes was done by hand. Apparently the WPA also decided to turn multiple lakes into one lake. Up to this point, sources mention four lakes in the park. But in January 1941, an article in the *La Junta Daily Democrat* stated that the “lake” at the park was nearly complete and that the two small lakes previously in the park had been combined and enlarged. There is no mention of what happened to the other two lakes that were apparently once part of the park design. Presumably they were filled in; possibly they were so damaged by the flood that WPA decided this was easier than

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 11

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

recreating them. The new lake was described as an "ideal place for boating in summer and skating during the winter." According to WPA files the project was completed February 26, 1941.



In March 1941 the *La Junta Daily Democrat* announced that a third WPA project for work in the park had been approved. The WPA would contribute \$9449 and the sponsor's share would be \$3162 for a total of \$12,611. The project was to complete park improvements that had been underway for several years. Work was to include leveling the ground in the south end so that it could be seeded. It was projected that work would begin in April. It is not clear if this project was ever carried out; no record of the work has been found in the WPA files.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 12

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

The Boy Scout Monument, installed in 1951, reflects the importance role of the park as a place of community gathering and recreation since the completion of the WPA work. The placing of the statue in La Junta City Park was part of a national celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. Between 1949 and 1951, identical replicas of the Statue of Liberty were installed across the United States. However, each statue rests on a unique base, designed by the local Boy Scouts. The statues were made by Friedley-Voshardt of Chicago and sold for \$300 to \$350. It is estimated that at least 200 statues were dedicated in 39 states. Several other Colorado communities also have statues including Colorado Springs, Estes Park, Fort Collins, Greeley, Johnstown, Kremmling, Longmont, Pueblo, and Trinidad.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 9 Page 13

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "City Park Project Will Start Monday." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 14 May 1936.
- "City Park Work Gets Writeup in WPA Journal." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 26 February 1937.
- "City Project Will Improve the City Park." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 7 September 1935.
- "CWA Projects Carried Forward Satisfactorily." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 10 March 1934.
- Diament, Marc. "Historic Structure Assessment of La Junta City Park." 25 October 2004. On file in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado
- "FDR Approves WPA Project for Park Work Here." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 20 March 1941.
- "La Junta Continues City Park Project." *Rocky Ford Daily Gazette Topic*, 26 January 1938.
- "Many Projects Being Worked Out Under Civil Works Setup." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 19 December 1933.
- "New Plan to Complete Park System for City." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 8 December 1938.
- "New Project for Park Program Ordered by City." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 21 January 1941.
- "Park Board Plans Additional WPA Work in City." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 9 January 1941.
- "Picnic Facilities Built in La Junta Park." *The WPA Worker*, February 1937: 20.
- "Presents Report on City Projects for City Council." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 16 July 1940.
- "Project at City Park Will Start Next Monday." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 24 October 1936.
- "Restoring the Little Sisters of Liberty." *American Profile*, 7 September 2003; p. 6-8.
- "Tennis Courts at City Park Near Final Stage." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 5 December 1939.
- "Urge City Park Plan Be Pushed." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 14 February 1938.
- Wolfenbarger, Deon. "Drought, Depression, and Dust: The New Deal in Eastern Colorado Phase 1 Survey Report." September 23, 2005. On file in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.
- "New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains." National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2005. On file in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 9 Page 14

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

"Work at Park to be Resumed." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 25 January 1938.

"Work on City Park is To Start March 11." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 26 February 1938.

"Work on Park is Started Today." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 11 March 1938.

"Workers Rush City Park Program to Completion." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 30 August 1939.

"WPA Schedule to Put 200 Men to Work in City." *La Junta Daily Democrat*, 9 November 1939.

Archival Sources

National Records and Archives Administration, College Park, Maryland

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 10 Page 15

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The park is located in the city of La Junta, Otero County, Colorado. The park boundaries are formed by 10th Street on the north, Colorado Avenue on the east, 14th Street on the south, and Park Avenue on the west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land historically associated with the park.

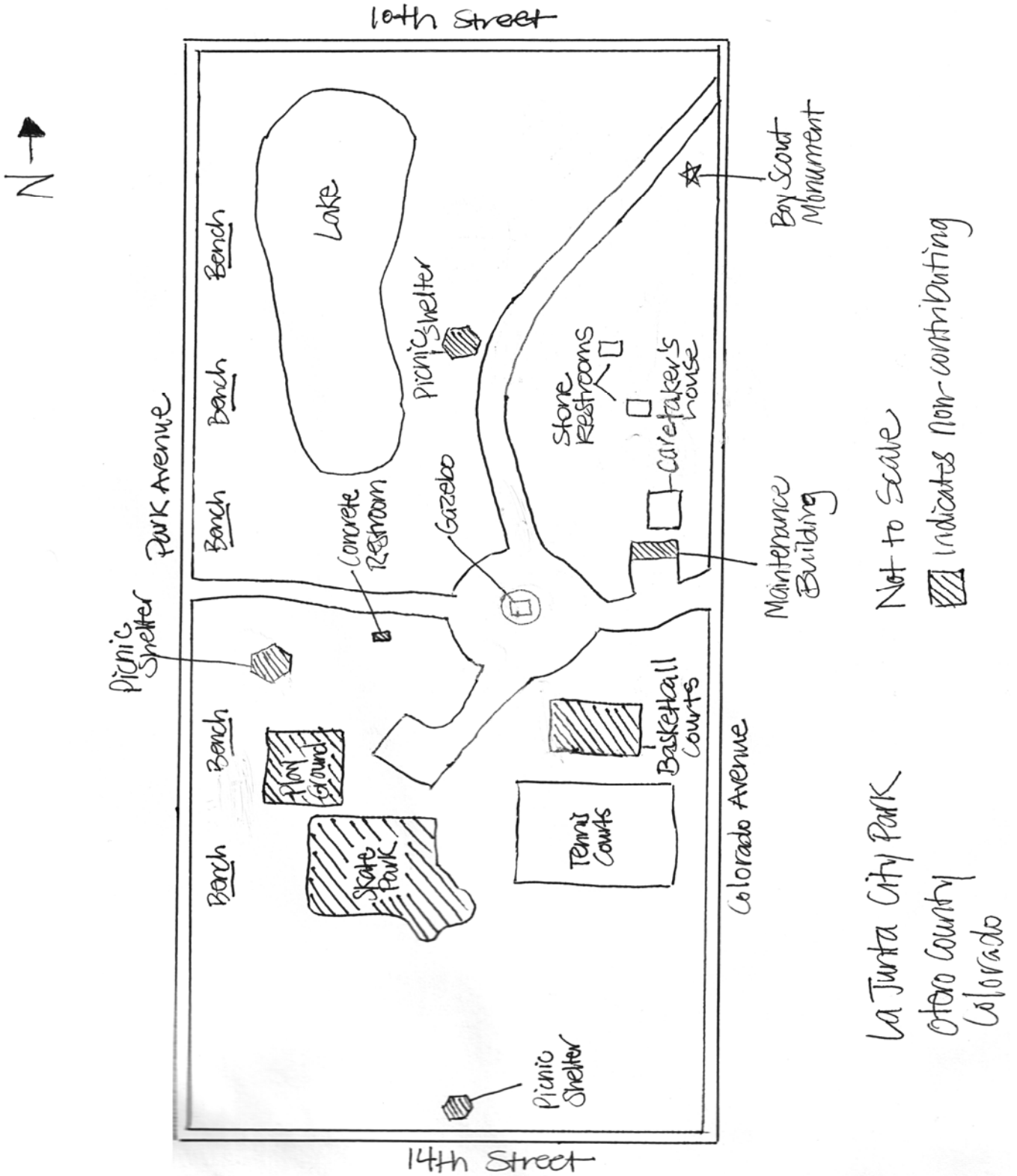
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park

Otero County, Colorado

Section number ___ Page 16

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)



United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park

Otero County, Colorado

Section number ___ Page 17

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Name of Property: La Junta City Park

Location: Otero County, Colorado

Photographer: Abigail Christman

Date of Photographs: January 10, 2006

Location of Negatives: Digital files submitted to National Register, Washington, D.C.

(Printed on Hewlett-Packard Premium photo paper with Hewlett-Packard 100 gray photo cartridge)

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	Northeast entrance to La Junta City Park showing planters constructed in the 1970s to prevent vehicular access at this entrance. Facing southwest.
2	View of stone wall lining Colorado Avenue. Facing south.
3	Looking into the park from the southwest corner showing stone boundary walls. Facing northeast.
4	Skate park with tennis courts in the background. Facing east.
5	Detail of stone wall. Facing north.
6	Stone wall at corner of Park Avenue and 12 th Street. Facing northeast.
7	Lake with picnic shelter visible in the background. Facing northeast.
8	Typical bench. Facing west.
9	Gazebo. Facing north.
10	Caretaker's house. Facing northwest.
11	Detail of entrance to caretaker's house. Facing west.
12	Rear of caretaker's house. Facing northeast.
13	Restroom building and stone wall. Facing east.
14	Restroom buildings. Facing northwest.
15	Detail of restroom building showing stonework and vigas. Facing east.
16	View of picnic shelter and wall surround the park. Facing northwest.
17	View of modern restroom building with wall lining 12 th Street in the background. Facing northeast.
18	View of modern playground with a picnic shelter visible on the left. Facing northeast.
19	View of modern maintenance building. Facing northeast.
20	View of Boy Scout Monument. Facing southwest.

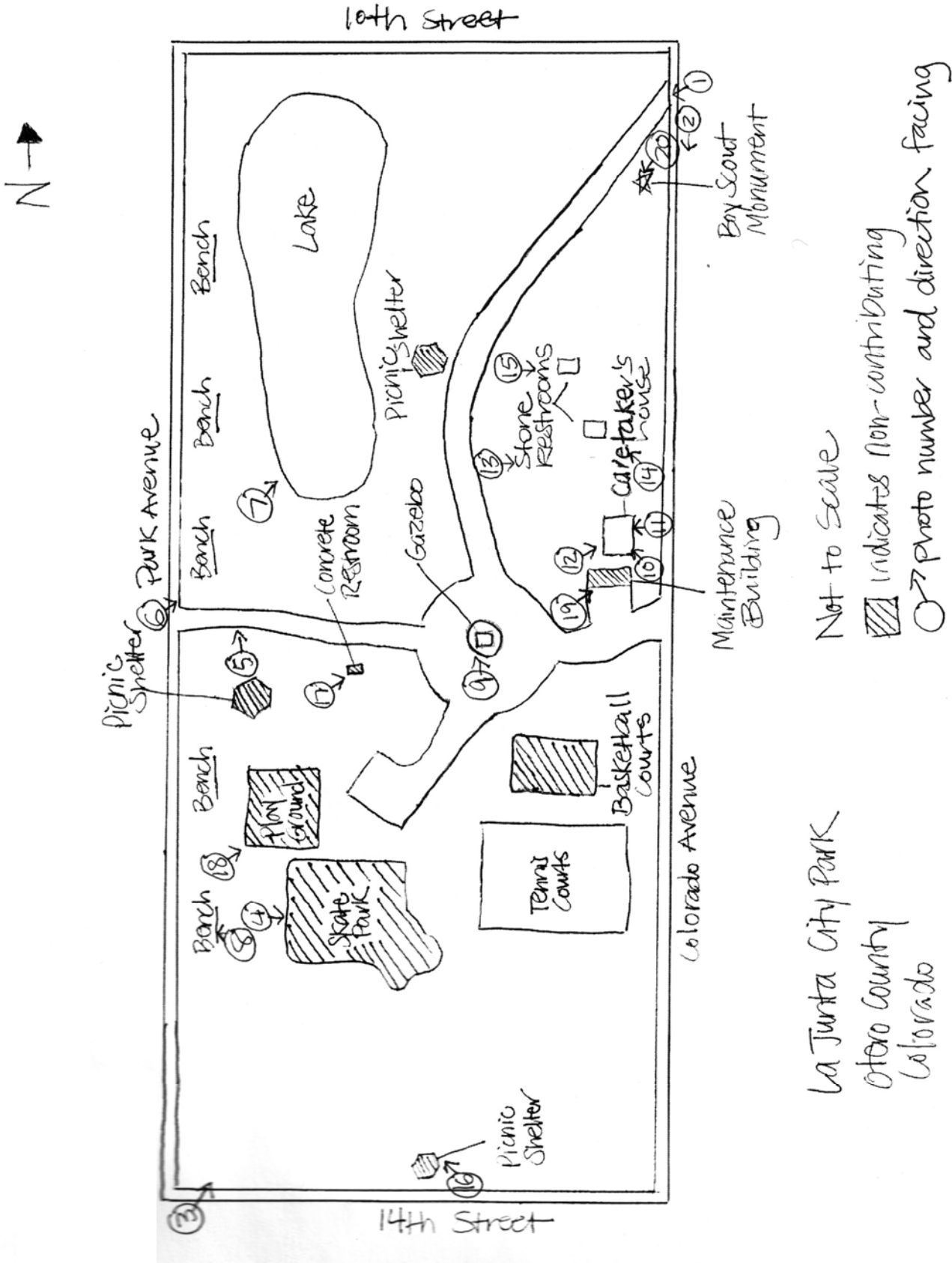
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park

Otero County, Colorado

Section number ___ Page 18

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)



La Junta City Park
Otero County
Colorado

Not to Scale

▨ Indicates Non-contributing

○➔ photo number and direction facing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Junta City Park

Otero County, Colorado

Section number Page 19

(New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS)

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

La Junta Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

PLSS: 6th PM, T24S, R55W, Sec. 11, SW NW
Elevation: 4115 feet

