

Property Name Barlow & Sanderson Stagecoach, Costilla County

AMENDMENT TO STATE REGISTER

Barlow & Sanderson Stagecoach (5CT.46.1)
Highway 159, Fort Garland Museum
Fort Garland, Costilla County

The Barlow & Sanderson Stagecoach was listed in the Colorado State Register on June 14, 1995. The structure was nominated under Criterion C for its significance in Engineering and under Criterion A for its significance in Transportation. During its era of service in the 1870s and 80s, the stagecoach served the San Luis Valley, transporting passengers and freight between what is now Colorado and New Mexico. Constructed circa 1871 by the Abbott-Downing Company, the stagecoach is of a type commonly referred to as a “mud wagon,” a coach that is lighter than Concord coaches (or mail coaches) and built to climb steep mountain trails. According to the State Register nomination, such coaches were used almost exclusively in the mountains in the early days of overland travel. With the rapid development of railroads throughout the state in the 1880s, stage routes in Colorado were eventually abandoned.

The Monte Vista Commercial Club, predecessor of the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, donated the stagecoach to the Colorado Historical Society (now History Colorado) for display at the Fort Garland Museum in 1959. However, the donation was accepted with three restrictions that do not meet current curatorial standards. These restrictions state that: 1) No other individual or organization may remove the stagecoach from Fort Garland; 2) Monte Vista must be allowed to use the stagecoach for special occasions; 3) The stagecoach will be kept in good condition. Under restrictions 1) and 2) imposed as part of the donation, History Colorado does not have the ability to manage the item in accordance with professional museum standards and best practices. In addition, custody and use of the stagecoach is such that the City of Monte Vista has requested the transfer of the stagecoach to their custody. Per state statute (CRS§24-80-202) History Colorado has the right to de-accession items that are determined by the president and board of directors of the society to be duplicates of other items held by the society, redundant examples of items of similar type held by the society, items that are beyond the scope of the society’s mission statement or collections policy, or items that are lacking in usefulness or historical value. While the stagecoach is an important artifact of Colorado’s history, the restrictions imposed on the donation are beyond the scope of History Colorado’s collection policy and the stagecoach was formally de-accessioned by the History Colorado Board of Directors on July 24, 2014.

In July 2014, the coach was removed to the City of Monte Vista, which had requested to use it, as per conditions imposed in the donation agreement, for their annual Ski Hi Stampede Celebration. As of this writing, the coach is housed in the City of Monte Vista Shop. Pending restoration activity, it will be placed inside the Transportation Museum of the West located at 916 1st Street in downtown Monte Vista where it will become a key part of their static displays, which are open to the public. The new location and setting is proposed to be in keeping with those at the time of nomination. This amendment proposes to recognize the new location in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.

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Initial restoration was accomplished through a 1996 State Historical Fund grant. The stagecoach has suffered some cosmetic damage in the ensuing years as the display shed in Fort Garland was open to the elements on the sides but it retains sufficient integrity for continued listing in the State Register. The City of Monte Vista has identified an enclosed location at the Transportation Museum of the West where the item can be on public display while ensuring long-term preservation. The stagecoach has not been part of the interpretation of Fort Garland and transfer to the City of Monte Vista for display at the Transportation Museum of the West offers a more appropriate interpretive context for the stagecoach in addition to improved conditions for preservation.

Property Owner: City of Monte Vista

Prepared by: History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
1200 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203

Date: August 13, 2014

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5CT.46.1

_____ Review Board Recommendation for Amendment

Approval Denial

_____ HC Board - State Register Amendment

Approved Denied

Certification of Removal: Vice-President, History Colorado

Date

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Original location:

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
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