

**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 *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 Cannon Creek Bridge
other names/site number MA0071

2. Location

street & number Madison County Rd. #5340 not for publication
city or town Cannon Creek vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Madison code 087 zip code 72727

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 for 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
 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
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:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____ _____ _____	_____	_____

Cannon Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Madison County, Arkansas
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 count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

"Historic Bridges of Arkansas"

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/bridge

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)/bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/reinforced concrete deck girder

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls N?A
roof N/A
other Concrete

Narrative Description

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

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** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- 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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1929-1954

Significant Dates

1929-1954

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Walsh & Thomas, Benton, Arkansas

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Arkansas Transportation & Highway Dept.—Bridges Division

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The 1929 bridge over the Cannon and Coon creeks is a two-lane curved concrete deck bridge that was bypassed in the mid 1980s, yet still serves local traffic as part of Madison County Road 5340, or “Cannon Creek Loop” as it is locally known. The bridge is approximately 100 feet in length, and crosses both the Cannon and Coon creeks in extreme southwest Madison County, and was constructed to ease travelers as they traveled across the Cannon Creek via a low-water bridge downstream, a route that was often treacherous, steep, and impassable at times of high water.

ELABORATION

The Cannon Creek Bridge is a reinforced concrete deck girder bridge that has an overall length of approximately 100 feet. The bridge spans both the Cannon and Coon creeks, two small bodies of water which feed into the White River in extreme southwest Madison County. The bridge’s decking measures 20 feet wide and its overall length is 103 feet. Four reinforced concrete piers support the bridge’s concrete decking. The guardrail on the bridge consists of evenly spaced concrete uprights connected by two rows of horizontal concrete beams. A metal plaque at each end of the bridge list the major players involved in the construction process. The plaque has the following information: CANNON CREEK/WALSH & THOMAS, CONTRACTOR/ARKANSAS/STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION/DWIGHT H. BLACKWOOD, CHAIRMAN/C.S. CHRISTIAN, ENGINEER/1929/BRIDGE NO. 1069.

The Cannon Creek Bridge, the design of which was standard in Arkansas during the 1920s and 1930s, is becoming increasingly rare. The bridge was bypassed by a new bridge constructed downstream in the late 1980s, and this new bridge has greatly lessened the amount of traffic that travels across the Cannon Creek Bridge. It still serves the few residents who live on nearby properties but carries practically no through traffic. This will help preserve the bridge as it will likely not fall victim to any future highway expansion projects. But for periodical repaving, the bridge has not been altered over the years. The Cannon Creek Bridge is inspected regularly by the state Transportation and Highway department, who report that it is in very good condition.

INTEGRITY

No structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Its location remains rural, and its setting remains pristine. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials. In addition, the bridge is still used for vehicular travel.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1929, the Cannon Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C** as the only known example of a curved concrete deck bridge in Arkansas. The bridge is uniquely curved to transverse two creeks in the area, the Cannon and the Coon, and because of its unique curve, attracted the attention of a nationally syndicated newspaper feature in the 1940s. As the only bridge in the Cannon Creek area and as a well preserved landmark of the 1929 road-building campaign by the Arkansas State Highway Department, the bridge is eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of vehicular transportation in Madison County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas."

ELABORATION

Traversing the hills of the Ozarks has always presented a challenge to travelers. Watershed moments like the completion of the rail tunnel at Winslow (1882) and more recently the Bobby Hopper Tunnel on Interstate Highway 540 (1998) have made the passage quicker and safer. A lesser-known portal, the bridge over Cannon Creek, is another landmark structure that made passage through the Ozarks more reliable.

At the turn of the last century, Madison County was booming. As the railroad expanded in the West, investors saw money in the trees, and the white oak forest of the Ozarks was harvested and milled into railroad ties. Many towns, most notably St. Paul, grew up overnight to support the teeming lumber industry. Though a railway served the area with freight and passenger service, as late as the 1920s, travel by automobile was a harrowing experience.

Before the construction of the bridge at Cannon Creek, travelers between the lumber boomtown of St. Paul and Fayetteville forded the creek at low-water times where the current bridge stands today. This route was treacherously steep and impassable in times of high water. The construction of the Cannon Creek Bridge enabled travelers to pass easily in all weather. The bridge was part of a larger road-building campaign in 1929 that included the construction of a bridge over the White River at St. Paul.

The firm of Walsh & Thomas of Benton, Arkansas, won a contract to build two bridges along Route 23/16 in 1928. Their plans for State Highway Bridge #1069 called for a design feature not seen in the state before or since, a twenty-four degree curve. Walsh & Thomas hired local workmen to build the bridge. They built all components of the bridge: footings, piers, beams, deck, and railings, of poured reinforced concrete. With the help of teams of mules, they shored up the banks of the creek beneath the bridge with dry-laid local stone. Two factors, the steep topography of the area and the confluence of Cannon and Coon creeks immediately west of the site, dictated the placement of the bridge and required the unique curved design. The bridge was completed in the summer of 1929 for a total of \$5,744.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

To the local people of Cannon Creek and the surrounding White River basin, the bridge represented the beginning of a new era. Soon after the bridge was completed, the depression years and the exhaustion of the forest silenced the tie mills and locomotives of the Ozarks. The bridge connected local people to places beyond the hills long before electricity or telephone service reached the region.

The unique curved bridge was a landmark on the twisty route of Hwy 16 and Hwy 23 South that became known as the Pig Trail. The design of the bridge attracted the attention of the syndicated newspaper feature "Ripley's Believe it or NOT!" in the 1940s, and the bridge was billed across the nation as the only one of its kind. In its years of active service, the bridge carried many a poultry truck into the hills and provided passage to thousands of Razorback fans traveling to football games. It also witnessed many accidents when drivers did not heed the reduced speed limit that the tight curve required. The Cannon Creek Bridge was bypassed by a new bridge in the 1980s. It still serves the few residents who live nearby, but carries practically no through traffic.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1929, the Cannon Creek Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C** as the only known example of a curved concrete deck bridge in Arkansas. The bridge is uniquely curved to transverse two creeks in the area, the Cannon and the Coon, and because of its unique curve, attracted the attention of a nationally syndicated newspaper feature in the 1940s. As the only bridge in the Cannon Creek area and as a well preserved landmark of the 1929 road-building campaign by the Arkansas State Highway Department, the bridge is eligible for nomination under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of vehicular transportation in Madison County. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Farmer, H. C. *Madison County Record*, May 23, 1929: p. 4.

Farmer, H. C. *Madison County Record*, July 18, 1929: p. 4.

Linz, Stewart. Telephone Interview conducted by Gary King. April 22, 2004.

(Gary King is my father. Stewart Linz is with the Arkansas State Highway Department Division of Bridges)

Cooper, Daisy Robbins. Personal Interview. December 23, 1999.

(Daisy Cooper is my maternal grandmother, who was born and raised near Cannon Creek.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Part of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 10, and part of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 3, all in T-14-N, R-28-W, Madison County, Arkansas. The bridge is approximately 100 feet in length.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the Cannon Creek Bridge.