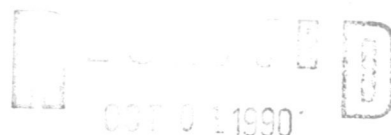


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format  
(Approved 03/88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name: Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive  
other names/site number: Colorado State Highway 74

### 2. Location

street & number: Colorado State Highway 74 (NA) not for publication  
city, town: Morrison (XX) vicinity  
state: Colorado code: CO county: Jefferson code: 059 zip code: 80465

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
( ) private	( ) building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
(X) public-local	(X) district	_____	_____ buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> structures
	( ) object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>7</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Denver Mountain Parks and Parkways

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

#### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  
( ) See continuation sheet.

Barbara Sudler

Signature of certifying official

9-26-90

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

#### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

☒ 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Arlene Byers

11/15/90

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

---

**6. Functions or Use**

---

**Historic Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Transportation / Road Related  

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---

**Current Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**Transportation / Road Related  

---

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---

**7. Description**

---

**Architectural Classification****(enter categories from instructions)**N/A  

---

---

---

**Materials****(enter categories from instructions)**foundations N/Awalls Stone  

---

roof N/Aother   

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---

---

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

---

Bear Creek Canyon Drive, a linear district, includes two miles of scenic road which is now part of State Highway 74. The drive is between the town of Morrison and the town of Idledale. The east boundary of this scenic drive district is the west boundary of the Red Rocks Mountain Park District.

The Denver Mountain Parks purchased a 200 foot wide strip of canyon land on either side of the meandering Bear Creek. When these lands were purchased in 1928, Bear Creek Canyon Drive ran directly along the stream and was easily within 200 feet of the stream and subject to flooding. Later, during the late 1930's and early 1940's the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) moved portions of the road back from the stream and raised it out of the flood plain to create a safer drive. When this realignment occurred, some portions of the road were moved outside the 200 foot boundary of the stream and these portions are included in the nominated boundaries. The entire road is now maintained by the State Highway Department, but was historically constructed and maintained as a joint venture between the State Department of Highways, Jefferson County, and the City of Denver Mountain Parks.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive was constructed with the same standards which had been established for all Denver Mountain Park scenic drives or parkways. The first section of the drive involved improvements along the narrow stagecoach road to ensure the road had no grades greater than six percent. These improvements began in ca. 1914, when the road from Denver to Morrison was constructed, but were not finished until 1921.

(X) See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

Much of Bear Creek Canyon Drive and adjacent lands to the south were included in Olmsted's acquisition plan of 1914. This drive was originally called the Denver Motor Club Road because Idledale was the location of the well-known Colorado Motor Club.

Just to the east of this district's boundaries, in the town of Morrison, columns marked the southern entry to the Denver Mountain Park System. The now demolished gateway columns were constructed to provide a positive sense of entry. The McFarland Gateway Columns were constructed in 1917 on either side of the road. These columns were similar to the stone monuments placed at the entrance of the Lariat Trail, yet Bear Creek's were lower. Once people had passed through this entry they had entered the Denver Mountain Park's park and parkway system. By the time they had reached this district's boundaries they were tightly enclosed by steep granite cliffs and within the drainage corridor of Bear Creek.

From the beginning, Bear Creek Canyon Drive was famous for its awe inspiring granite cliffs, diverse vegetation, immense number of wildflowers, and roaring mountain stream. The area became a favorite spot for streamside camping, fishing, and picnicking because of the abundant water, shade, grassy nooks, and willow fringed retreats suitable for tents and fishing. The drive was considered a "treasure house of beauty and pleasure" with an abundance of clear clean water heavily stocked from the Denver Mountain Park's own spawning ponds in Starbuck Park just up the road at Idledale.

One unique cultural element along the drive is the water pipeline which brings drinking water from Idledale to the town of Morrison. This pipeline, originally constructed in the 1920's, is located on the south side of Bear Creek at the edge of the granite cliffs and is not in the nominated boundaries.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive is enclosed on each side by narrow perpendicular walls of solid granite. These dark stone cliffs tower many feet above the road and create an enclosed atmosphere. The creek roars over huge boulders throughout the length of the drive creating small water falls and swirling pools of water. The original road ran directly adjacent to the creekbed and crossed the creek as needed to remain on the most gently sloping terrain. Since Bear Creek Canyon was



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   7   Page   3  

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

the site of some of the worst floods in Colorado, this road layout was not found to be satisfactory. By 1917 concrete bridges were constructed to reduce the chances of wash out and provide a safer drive. However, the original location of the road, within the floodway of a canyon stream, was still not appropriate. One caught in these floods had little chance of escaping due to the steep surrounding cliffs.

During the mid to late 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corp, from the Mount Morrison Camp, raised the road out of the floodway. The road design shows elaborate and difficult construction with six large stone retaining walls rising up to twenty feet in height at the very edge of the roaring creek. Construction was a difficult task and exemplifies the skilled craftsmanship of the CCC and the excellent use of native materials to blend with the surrounding environment. The CCC walls have withstood the force and power of many a flood rain and the enormous spring flows carried by the creek. The road was concentrated on the north side of the stream and in many areas, pushed directly along the edge of the cliff walls. In certain areas the road was cut directly through the granite cliffs providing a feeling of enclosure. Turns had to be kept sharp to respond to the natural flow of the creek and the canyon walls. Much of the road has steep drops to the swirling creek below. Pull-offs are provided in many areas to provide excellent stream and canyon viewing as well as fishing access points. In certain areas, the old roadbed of the 1920's can still be seen as an overgrown path near the edge of the stream.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive, as constructed by the CCC, has had few changes and is a contributing structure. A continuous guardrail has been installed for safety and the road has been paved. The guardrail is noncontributing. Other than these few changes, the scenic drive remains intact. The native vegetation, the massive cliffs, the roaring creek and the contributing rock walls of the CCC still exist as they did many years ago.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive is consistent with the description of Scenic Mountain Drives in the Multiple Property Overview submission for the Denver Mountain Parks and meets the registration requirements.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   7   Page   4  

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Contributing Structures (7)

Bear Creek Scenic Drive  
6 rock retaining walls

Noncontributing structures (1)

Guardrail

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:        ( ) nationally        ( ) statewide        (x) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria        (x) A    ( ) B    (x) C    ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)        ( ) A    ( ) B    ( ) C    ( ) D    ( ) E    ( ) F    ( ) G

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Landscape Architecture</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1914</u>
<u>Engineering</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1914-1921-1928</u>
<u>Community Planning and Development</u>	<u>1914-1940</u>	<u>1914</u>
<u>Recreation/Culture</u>	<u>1914-1940</u>	<u>1914</u>

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Significant Person

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Olmsted, Jr. Frederick Law

Olmsted Brothers

Civilian Conservation Corp

**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

Bear Creek Canyon Drive is significant under criteria A for Community Planning and Recreation/Culture, its association with the City Beautiful Movement in Denver as an extension of the Denver Parks and Parkways System and C for Engineering and Landscape Architecture for association with masters in design, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., Olmsted Brothers and for the workmanship of the members of the Civilian Conservation Corp. The scenic drive is a very important part of Denver's Park and Parkway System since it is the southern gateway and provides the first glimpse of the beauties of the Denver Mountain Park System. This scenic drive is unique in the system since it is designed through tight canyonlands beside a gushing mountain stream. The drive expresses the idea of expanding the park and parkway system into the mountains and through rough terrain and unusual landforms outside the city limits yet accessible to city residents and tourists.

One of the purposes of the drive was to protect the area from the encroachment of growth and has significance in community development and planning. Growth could damage the scenic character, allow structures in the floodplain, and remove this special area from public use. This idea of protecting lands outside the city limits for scenic drives was similar to the Park and Parkway Movement which was occurring nation wide at this time.

(X) See continuation sheet

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 2

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

The drive is significant under Criterion C as the work of a master in Landscape Architecture because it follows the recommendations within the Olmsted Brother's plan. This drive preserves lands along a major mountain creek corridor which is specifically recommended in the Olmsted Brother's plan. Olmsted, Jr. chose lands adjacent to all the major mountain creek corridors within close reach of Denver and specifically recommended that these lands along Bear Creek be preserved as part of the Denver Mountain Park System.

The drive meets Criterion C for its workmanship by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC). The road as experienced today, was engineered and constructed by the CCC and exemplifies their quality and skills. The skills are not shown through shelters, picnic facilities, or other public use elements, but instead through the construction of a road and the massive retaining walls. Not just any road, but a road which must withstand the force of a roaring mountain creek which constantly batters at its edges and must be cut through solid granite. This construction was a true feat and clearly exemplifies the quality work of the CCC.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive is a significant part of the Denver Mountain Park System and, as such, is significant to the history of Landscape Architecture and Community Planning and Development. It was designated the southern access to the mountain parks and set the stage for the beautiful mountain environment which would be experienced. In addition, it is one of the few canyon drives within the system which winds through such steep enclosing cliffs. This drive provides a unique visual and sensory experience to its users which is unequalled within the entire system.

Bear Creek Canyon Drive meets the registration requirements established in the Multiple Property Documentation form for the property type of Scenic Mountain Drives in Denver Mountain Parks for its manmade elements, such as the CCC walls and the road, as well as its integrity of location and feeling. The period of significance has been arbitrarily ended at 1940 to comply with the Register's 50 year requirement.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

(X) See continuation sheet

### 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
- (X) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other

### Specify Repository:

Denver Parks and Recreation Dept.  
Denver Public Library

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of property: 688 acres more or less

### UTM References

A 1|3 4|8|1|6|2|0|4|3|8|9|0|5|0 B 1|3 4|8|1|6|2|0 4|3|8|8|9|8|0|  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

C 1|3 4|8|1|2|3|0| 4|3|8|8|9|1|0| D 1|3 4|8|1|4|3|0| 4|3|8|9|0|4|0|  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northin0

(X) See continuation sheet

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### Verbal Boundary Description

(X) See continuation sheet

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### Boundary Justification

(X) See continuation sheet

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

---

Name/Title: Ann Moss, Landscape Architect

Organization: Shapins/Moss, Inc.

Street & Number: 1702 Mariposa Ave.

City or Town: Boulder

Date: October 3, 1988

Telephone: 303-449-8450

State: CO Zip Code: 80302

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

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Section number 9 Page 3

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 4

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

Denver, City and County of: Parks and Recreation Department, Denver Mountain  
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NPS Form 10-900a  
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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number	<u>10</u>	Page	<u>2</u>	
			UTMs	<u>Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive</u>
E.	13 480000 4389660	F.	13 479870 4389880	
G.	13 479890 4390000	H.	13 479510 4389920	

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 3

Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

Verbal Boundary Description

A strip of land two hundred (200 ft.) on either side of the center meandering line of Bear Creek, excepting any part of said strip lying within Overlook Park as officially platted and recorded in the office of the Recorder of Jefferson County, Colorado. Beginning at a point in the southwest quarter (SW 1/4) of Northwest quarter (NW 1/4) of Section 33, Township 4 South, Range 70 West, on Bear Creek State Highway and ending at the SE corner of Section 34, T4S, R70W. 48.81 feet North of the SE corner of said Section 34. The boundary includes the northern most right-of-way line along the entire section of State Highway within this area and all land between the highway and creek. See U. S. G. S. map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the lands originally owned by the City and County of Denver which are within 200 feet of either side of Bear Creek and State Highway 74 including the right-of-way between the highway and creek. These boundaries include those lands historically associated with Bear Creek and the Scenic Drive.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number photo Page 1  
log Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive

PHOTO LOG - See also Photograph Map

The following will be the same for all photographs within the Bear Creek Scenic Mountain Drive District:

1. Name of Property: Bear Creek Scenic Mountain Drive
2. Location: Jefferson County, Colorado. Nearest town, Morrison, Colorado
3. Photographer: Ann Moss
4. Date of Photograph: September, 1988
5. Location of Original Negative: City and County of Denver

Photo #	Description
1	Road alignment through granite cliffs of Bear Creek Canyon, looking northwest.
2.	CCC walls along Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive, looking west
3.	Bear Creek within Bear Creek Scenic Mountain Drive, looking west
4.	Granite rock and Bear Creek, looking west
5.	Bear Creek, looking east
6.	Bear Creek and environment, looking north
7.	Road alignment and rock outcrops, looking west
8.	Road alignment and granite rock, looking northeast

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

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Denver Mountain Parks MPS

Jefferson County, COLORADO

Date Listed

## COVER

1. Red Rocks Park
2. Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive
3. Bergen Park
4. Colorow Point Park
5. Corwina Park, O'Fallon Park, Pence Park
6. Dedisse Park
7. Genesee Park
8. Lariat Trail Scenic Mountain Drive
9. Lookout Mountain Park

Substantive Review

5/18/90

Substantive Review

5/18/90

Entered in the

11/15/90

Entered in the

11/15/90

Entered in the  
National Register

11/15/90

Substantive Review

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11/15/90

Entered in the

11/15/90

Entered in the

11/15/90

Entered in the  
National Register

11/15/90

Entered in the  
National Register

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bear Creek Canyon Scenic Mountain Drive  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Denver Mountain Parks MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, Jefferson

DATE RECEIVED: 10/01/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/17/90  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/02/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/15/90  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90001706

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: Y LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/15/90 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



---

CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count      \_\_\_resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic      \_\_\_current

---

DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

\_\_\_summary paragraph  
\_\_\_completeness  
\_\_\_clarity  
\_\_\_applicable criteria  
\_\_\_justification of areas checked  
\_\_\_relating significance to the resource  
\_\_\_context  
\_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance  
\_\_\_justification of exception  
\_\_\_other

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_acreage      \_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_UTMs      \_\_\_boundary justification

---

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_sketch maps    \_\_\_USGS maps    \_\_\_photographs    \_\_\_presentation

---

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_



1. Bear Creek Scenic  
Drive

Denver Mtn Parks

Jefferson Co., CO





2. Bear Creek Scenic Drive  
Denver Mtn Parks  
Jefferson Co., CO



3. Bear Creek Scenic Drive  
Denver Mtn Parks  
Jefferson co., CO



4. Bear Creek Scenic Drive

Denver Mtn. Parks

Jefferson Co., CO



5. Bear Creek Scenic Drive

Denver Mtn Parks

Jefferson co., CO





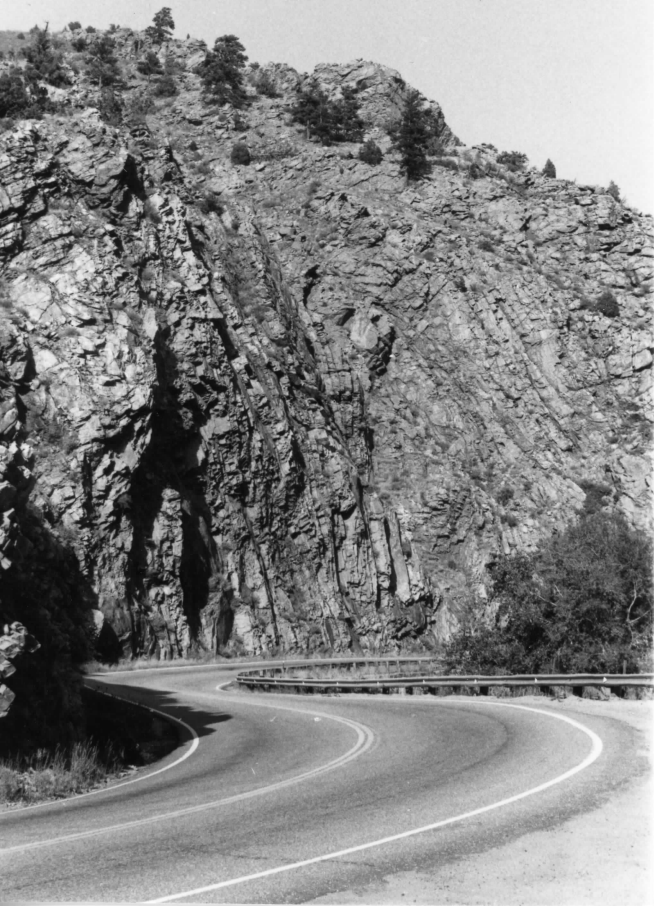
16 Bear Creek Scenic Drive

Denver Mtn Parks

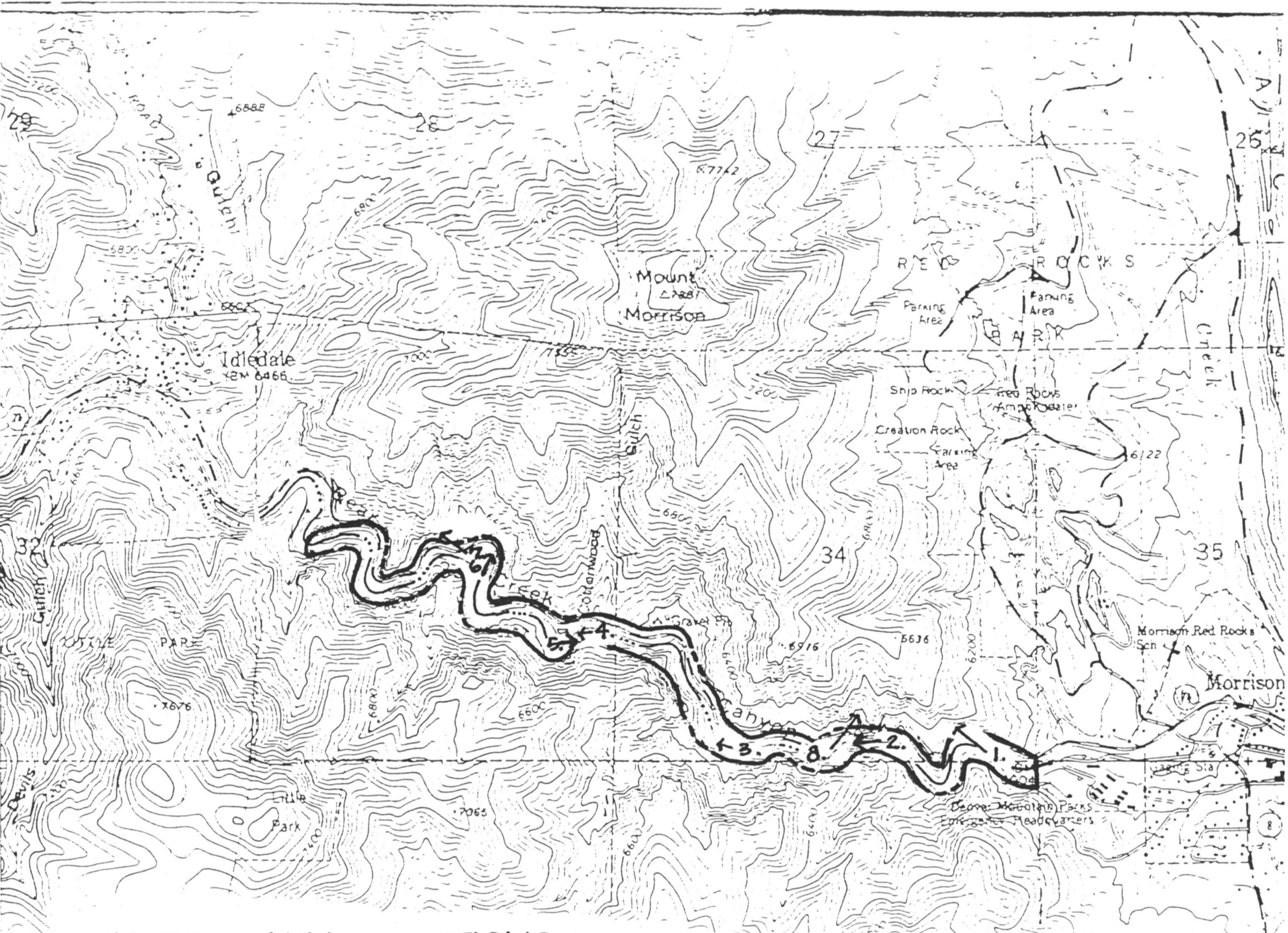
Jefferson Co., CO



7. Bear Creek Scenic Drive  
Denver Mtn Parks  
Jefferson co., CO



8 Bear Creek Scenic Drive  
Denver Mtn Parks  
Jefferson Co., CO

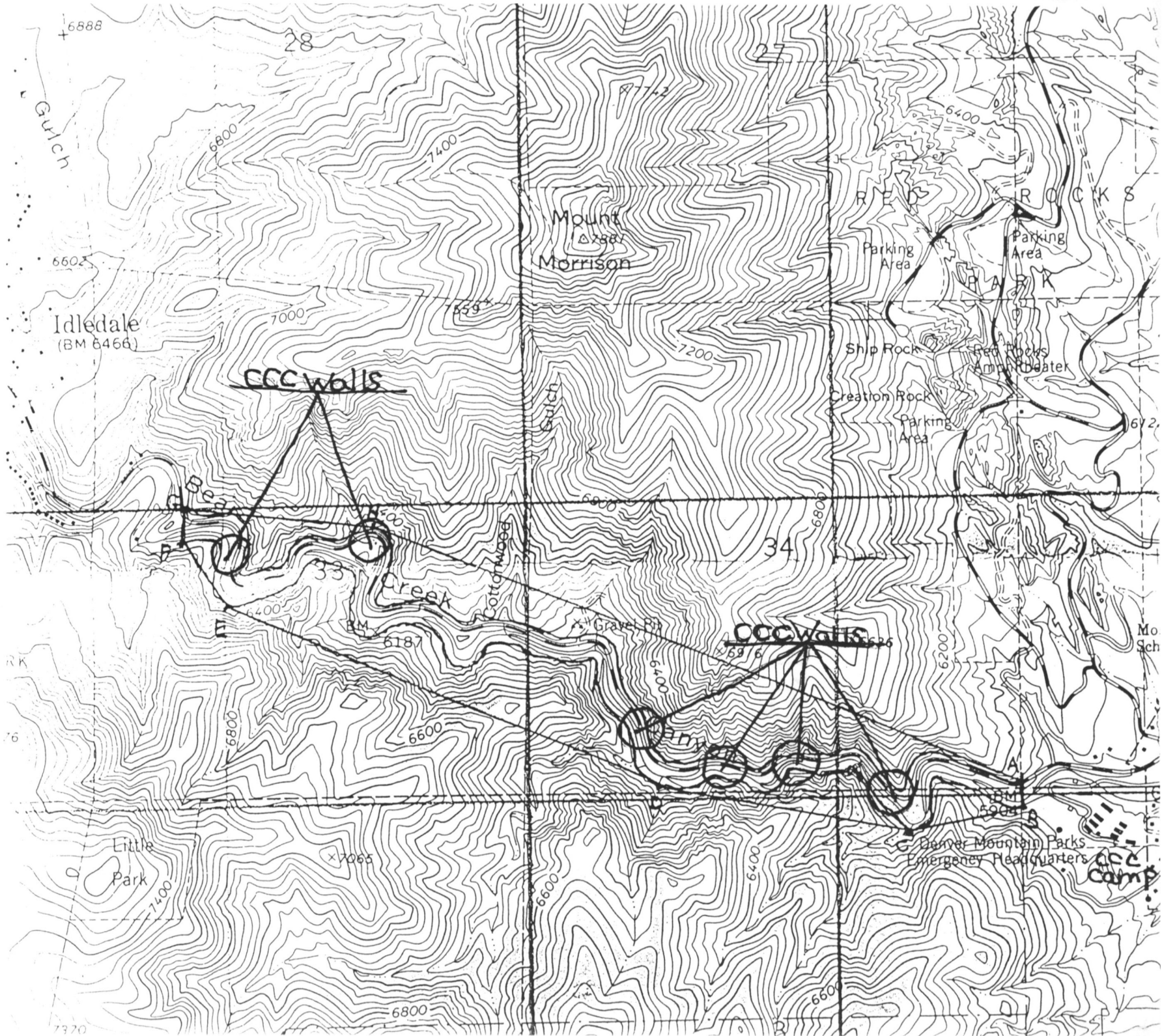


PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS  
BEAR CREEK SCENIC MOUNTAIN DRIVE

Map 2 of 2

USGS-ENLARGED NORTH





Bear Creek Canyon  
Scenic Drive

6 contributing  
Rock Walls

Map 1 of 2

Scale: enlarged  
U.S.G.S.

