

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Listed  
July 17, 2013

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1

other names/site number Charlie's or Bentrup's Ruts, NPS Master Plan #193, Arch. Site #14KY308, KHRI #093-1280-00001

## 2. Location

street & number 3 Mi. W of Deerfield on north side of US-50 Hwy  not for publication

city or town Deerfield  vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Kearny code 093 zip code 67838

## 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 forth 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

SEE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail (2012)

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: N/A  
walls: N/A  
roof: N/A  
other: N/A

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary

The Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1, also known as Charlie's Ruts or Bentrup's Ruts, is located in Kearny County, in southwest Kansas (Figures 1 and 2). The swales are found 3 miles west of Deerfield (and 4 miles northeast of Lakin) on the north side of US Highway 50, west of the intersection of County Road U (north-south) and US Highway 50 (east-west). Located in the southwest and southeast quarters of Section 8, Township 24 South, Range 35 West, these clearly visible intact swales span an area of approximately 244 meters (800 feet) (east-west) by 122 meters (400 feet) (north-south) and follow a northeast-southwest path. The triangular 11.17-acre property includes at least 12 visible swales that are an excellent example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the revised multiple property nomination.

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### Elaboration

The Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 is part of an approximately 85-mile stretch of the trail between the Lower and Upper crossings of the Arkansas River. While it is difficult to appreciate the full number on the ground, the property contains at least 12 parallel trail swales. They are oriented in a northeast-southwest direction across the site, roughly paralleling the route of the nearby Arkansas River to the south of this site.

#### *Landscape<sup>1</sup>*

This area of Kearny County on the north side of US Highway 50 is located within the High Plains section of the Great Plains province of the Interior Plains division of North America.<sup>2</sup> The High Plains section consists of a relatively featureless plain that covers most of the western quarter of the state and extends in a peninsula-like projection into south central Kansas as far as Kingman and Reno counties. Although heavily dissected along its eastern periphery, the High Plains is essentially a plateau with broad reaches of flat uplands and poorly developed surface drainage. The major river valleys – mainly the Smoky Hill, Arkansas, and Cimarron – are broad and have gentle side slopes, which extend downward to relatively narrow flats. Minor valleys are also present, often in the form of short, steep-sided, narrow canyons leading into the larger river valleys, and numerous shallow depressions or basins of various shapes and sizes can be found scattered throughout the uplands. Overall, however, the landscape is one of "phenomenal flatness and uniformity."<sup>3</sup> Geologically, the High Plains consist of Pleistocene-aged loess (wind-blown silt deposits) overlying the sands and gravels of the widespread Ogallala formation. The loess ranges up to 100 feet or more in thickness; nevertheless, it is only a surface veneer in comparison to the massive and much thicker Ogallala formation, which underlies it. Because of the loess, surface exposures of the Ogallala are confined to dissected or otherwise eroded areas, mainly along the edges of the major stream courses. In those locations, seeps and springs are common.

The natural vegetation of the High Plains consists of a vast expanse of prairie cut through by narrow, discontinuous ribbons of riverine forest. The potential natural vegetation of the region includes short grass prairie and floodplain forest or savanna.<sup>4</sup> The prairie contains a growth of blue grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and buffalograss (*Buchloë dactyloides*) along with a few other grasses and forbs. The forbs are most common in the southern part of the state. The overall terrain surrounding this site in Kearny County is prairie, having intermittent patches of yucca (*Yucca spp.*) and buffalograss throughout the area.

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<sup>1</sup> The following two paragraphs are adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 311-330.

<sup>3</sup> Waldo R. Wedel, "An introduction to Kansas archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 8.

<sup>4</sup> A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 586-604.

The terrain slopes from northeast to southwest across the site and probably influenced the orientation of the swales. Elevations range from approximately 914 meters (3000 feet) at the eastern boundary to 905 meters (2970 feet) at the western edge. The site is to the north of the floodplain of the Arkansas River, the marshland of which presented an obstacle to wagon movement. Subsequent man-made features have encroached upon the site's physical setting. US Highway 50 bounds the site to the south, an artificial drainage ditch is to the east, and an artificial pond is situated in the central portion. The land is currently used for minimal livestock grazing.

### *Transportation Site*

The Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 is an excellent example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype) as defined in the revised multiple property nomination. At least 12 swales are visible, confirming that, at least in portions of the trail west of Council Grove, caravans traveled in a four-abreast formation at the least. The swales abruptly enter the site from a fence line on the east side at the margin of the Great Eastern Ditch, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century-- irrigation canal (Figures 1 and 2). The swales head southwest and cross an intermittent creek and artificial pond in the center of the property. They become less visible on the southwest side of this drainage.

The ruts extend along a corridor approximately 183 meters (600 feet) wide in a northeast-southwest direction for 125 meters (409 feet) until they meet the creek and associated pond. At least three visible swales continue for another 145.5 meters (477.5 feet) on the southwest side of the pond and creek where the property is narrowest. Adjacent to the southwest boundary along US Highway 50 is a parking area with a Kearny County Historical Society sign. Also located in this area is a Kansas Historical Marker describing the swales; it was erected by the Kearny County Historical Society and the Kansas State Historical Society in 1981. This parking area and its signs are not included within the boundaries of the site.

The segment, together with its contributing land area, retains a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association required for registration.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

Commerce \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1821-1870 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the initiation of trail traffic over this segment in 1821 and ends with the abandonment of this section of the trail by March 1870 when the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (Kansas Pacific) reached Kit Carson, Colorado.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 in Kearny County, Kansas is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail and under Criterion D for its potential to yield important information about this segment of the trail. Its period of significance begins with the initiation of traffic over this segment of the trail in 1821 and ends in 1870, when the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (Kansas Pacific) reached Kit Carson, Colorado. This site materially reflects important historic events outlined in the historic contexts: International Trade on the Mexican Road, 1821-1846; The Mexican-American War and the Santa Fe Trail, 1846-1848; Expanding National Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1848-1861; The Effects of the Civil War on the Santa Fe Trail, 1861-1865; and The Santa Fe Trail and the Railroad, 1865-1880, as well as the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

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### Elaboration

Traffic along the Santa Fe Trail followed various minor routes to and from Santa Fe that were part of either the Cimarron or Mountain routes.<sup>5</sup> The Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 is located on a stretch of the trail that connected the Lower and Upper Arkansas River crossings that continued the Cimarron Route through southwest Kansas. The Upper Arkansas River Crossing was the last major opportunity to decide between the Cimarron and Mountain routes; thus, travelers on this segment in Kearny County included those going to Lower Cimarron Spring via the Upper Arkansas River Crossing (Cimarron Route) and those going to Bent's Fort in Colorado (Mountain Route) (Figure 3).

William Becknell initiated travel to Santa Fe in 1821. His expedition entered New Mexico using pack animals through Emery Gap on the present-day Colorado-New Mexico border and may have passed through this site. Wagons were introduced over the Santa Fe Trail in 1822; however, the Mountain Route of the trail was not widely used until the 1840s. In fact, before the Mexican-American War, the Cimarron Route was considered *the* Santa Fe Trail Route. Therefore, before 1846, this segment likely saw a majority of travelers heading to the Upper Crossing of the Arkansas River to head into Mexico along the Cimarron Route. After 1846, the majority of trail traffic through this site was headed toward Colorado.

In addition to its commercial and transportation functions related to the Santa Fe Trail, this portion of the route formed part of a military transportation network. During the Mexican-American War, the Army of the West under the command of Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny traversed this portion of the trail. The Army of the West left Fort Leavenworth on June 16, 1846, and chose to follow the Mountain Route of the trail because it provided access to water and to a ready-made base for operations at Bent's Fort.<sup>6</sup> From Bent's Fort, on August 2, 1846, the Army of the West marched toward Santa Fe, reaching the city unchallenged on August 18, 1846.<sup>7</sup> As part of the Mountain Route, the portion of the trail contained within this site continued to serve a military supply function during the Civil War. During and after the 1840s, Army supplies were destined for forts such as Bent's New Fort, Fort Lyon (Fort Wise), and Fort Union.

Commercial traffic along the Mountain Route (and therefore along this segment) began to increase in 1846. The first wagon train to succeed the Army of the West along the Mountain Route left Independence, Missouri in June 1846 and included Susan Shelby Magoffin. The leader of this wagon train was Jacob Hall, and in late 1860, the partnership of Hall and Porter requested that they be allowed to move their mail service to

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<sup>5</sup> William G. Buckles, "The Santa Fe Trail System," *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 79; Otis E. Young, "Military Protection of the Santa Fe Trail and Trade," *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. XLIX (October 1954): 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>7</sup> Buckles, "The Santa Fe Trail System," 45; Jack D. Rittenhouse, *The Santa Fe Trail: A Historical Bibliography* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1971), 21.

the Mountain Route.<sup>8</sup> Shortly thereafter the Hall and Porter stage line was sold to the Missouri Stage Company headed by Preston Roberts, Jr. Hall retained the mail contract but transferred its operation to Roberts' firm. By early 1861, the Postmaster General allowed the new firm to transfer the mail and stage route to the Mountain Route.<sup>9</sup> This portion of the trail experienced emigrant traffic in the late 1840s and throughout the 1850s with many of these emigrants destined for the gold mines of Colorado.

In the late 1860s, the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (whose name changed to the Kansas Pacific in 1869) approached the Colorado state line, truncating the length of the wagon route to Santa Fe. The Barlow & Sanderson Stage Company continued to use this truncated route of the trail from 1866 to June 1868.<sup>10</sup> When the Union Pacific Eastern Division reached the short-lived city of Sheridan (near Fort Wallace in Wallace County, Kansas) in June 1868, the eastern terminus of the trail shifted to this area approximately 100 miles north-northwest of the Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1. By March 1870 the railroad had reached Kit Carson, Colorado, spelling the end of trail traffic along the Santa Fe Trail east of this town.

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail segments have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. Though no such surveys have been undertaken on this trail segment, there is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This segment and its contributing land area have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of the trail through Kearny County, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swales and adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century trade and economic development. Further investigation could address key questions regarding trade and transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played by the military, various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.<sup>11</sup>

The site is part of a parcel of land donated by the previous owner, Paul Bentrup, to the Kearny County Historical Society, with the express purpose of “preserving the wagon ruts on the Old Santa Fe Trail....”<sup>12</sup> Paul Bentrup's father, Charlie, who owned this property before his son, is the site's namesake. The 12 swales within the site represent one of the few remaining examples of the route that spanned between the Lower and Upper Arkansas River crossings.

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<sup>8</sup> Morris F. Taylor, *First Mail West: Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), 73.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-131.

<sup>11</sup> Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail Multiple Property Documentation Form (Revised)*. August 2012, F117. Citation covers paragraph.

<sup>12</sup> Quitclaim Deed from Paul F. Bentrup to the Kearny County Historical Society, notarized November 4, 1984.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Buckles, William G. "The Santa Fe Trail System." *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 79-87.

Kansas State Historical Society. *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail Multiple Property Documentation Form (Revised)*. August 2012.

Kuchler, A.W. "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas." *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 586-604.

Quitclaim Deed from Paul F. Bentrup to the Kearny County Historical Society, notarized November 4, 1984.

Rittenhouse, Jack D. *The Santa Fe Trail: A Historical Bibliography*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

Schoewe, W.E. "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography." *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 311-330.

Taylor, Morris F. *First Mail West: Stagecoach Lines on the Santa Fe Trail*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.

Wedel, Waldo R. "An introduction to Kansas archeology." *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 8.

Young, Otis E. "Military Protection of the Santa Fe Trail and Trade." *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. XLIX, No. 1 (October 1954): 19-32.

**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: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 11.17 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Map Datum WGS84

1: 37.973822,-101.186977                      3: 37.973859,-101.182453  
2: 37.975637,-101.183602                      4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The property is bounded to the south by the fence along the northern margin of U.S. Highway 50 (excluding the pull-out with historical marker) and to the east by the western margin of the Great Eastern Ditch. The northern boundary was chosen so as to encompass only the historically significant Santa Fe Trail resources and a 50 meter (164 feet) contributing land area on the north side of the farthest swale.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries of the nominated property are largely determined by man-made features of the surrounding landscape. They enclose a triangular area of approximately 11.17 acres which includes the swales and a 50 meter (164 feet) contributing land area along the farthest edge of the swales, as required in the revised multiple property nomination.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tim Weston, Amanda Loughlin, Laura Groves  
organization Kansas State Historical Society                      date July 2012  
street & number 6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave                      telephone (785)272-8681  
city or town Topeka                      state KS                      zip code 66615-1099  
e-mail cultural\_resources@kshs.org

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Historic images, maps, etc.)

**Photographs:**

**Name of Property:** Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment  
**City or Vicinity:** Deerfield vicinity  
**County/State:** Kearny County, KS  
**Photographer:** Laura Groves  
**Date of Photos:** 13 October 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 5:** View east at swales in the central portion of the property.
- 2 of 5:** View west at swales in the western portion of the property.
- 3 of 5:** View east at swales in the far eastern portion of the property.
- 4 of 5:** View west across swales from eastern portion of the property.
- 5 of 5:** Looking NE across swales from central portion of the property.

**Property Owner:**

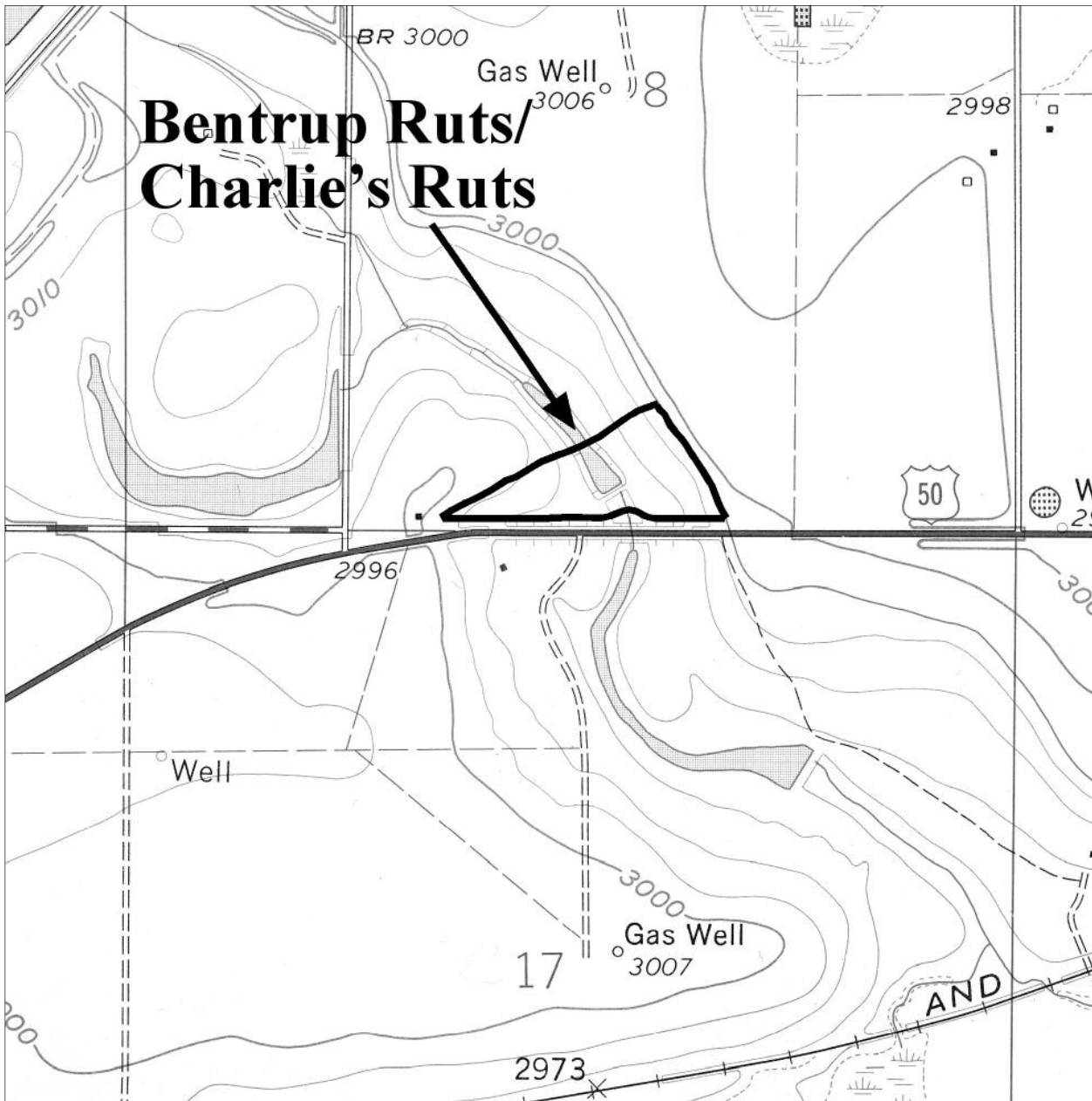
(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name On file with SHPO  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1.



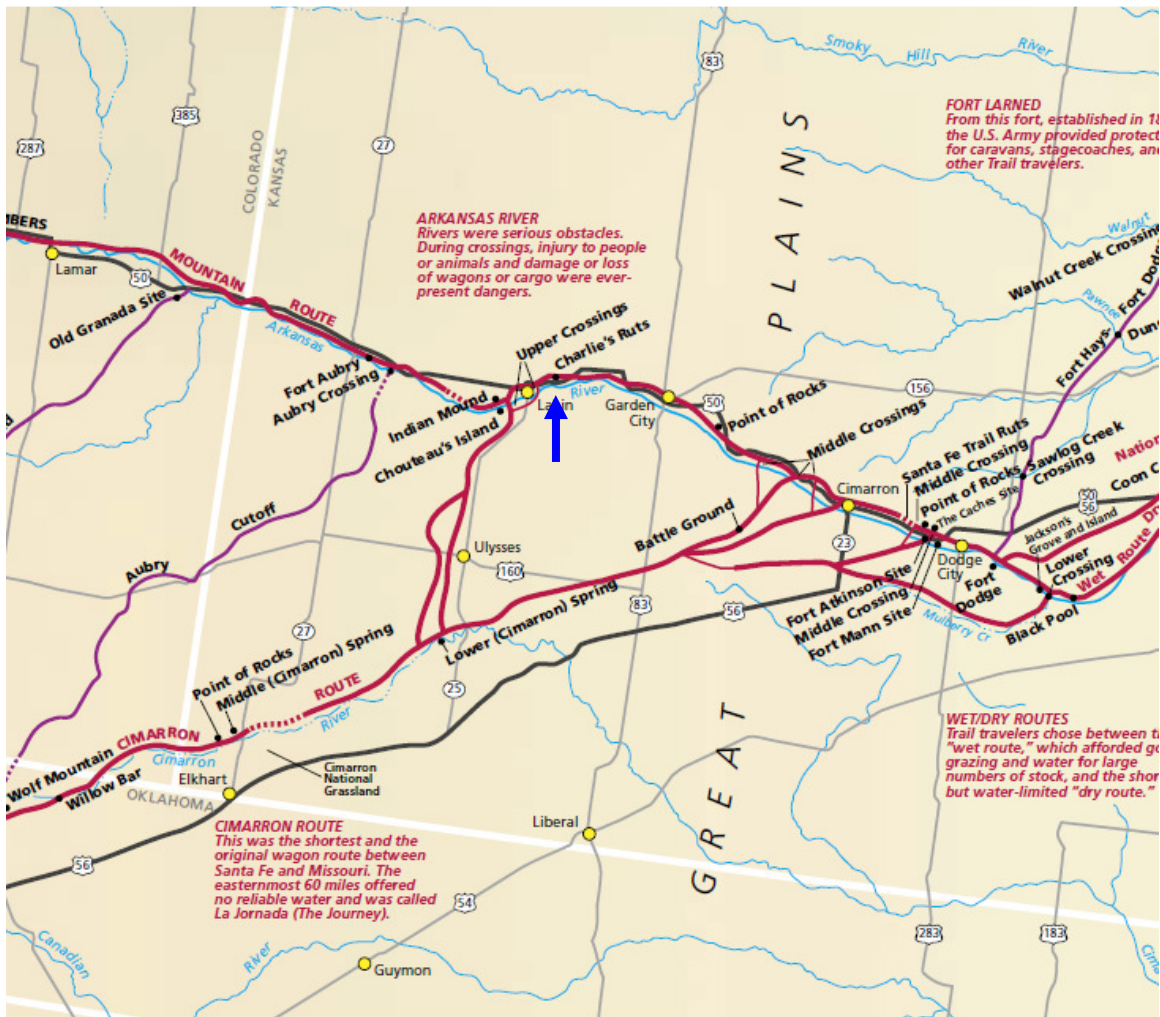
Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 (Charlie's Ruts).  
North of US-50 Highway.  
USGS Deerfield 7.5' Quadrangle Map

Figure 2.



Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 (Charlie's Ruts).  
Current aerial view of site north of US-50 Highway.

Figure 3.



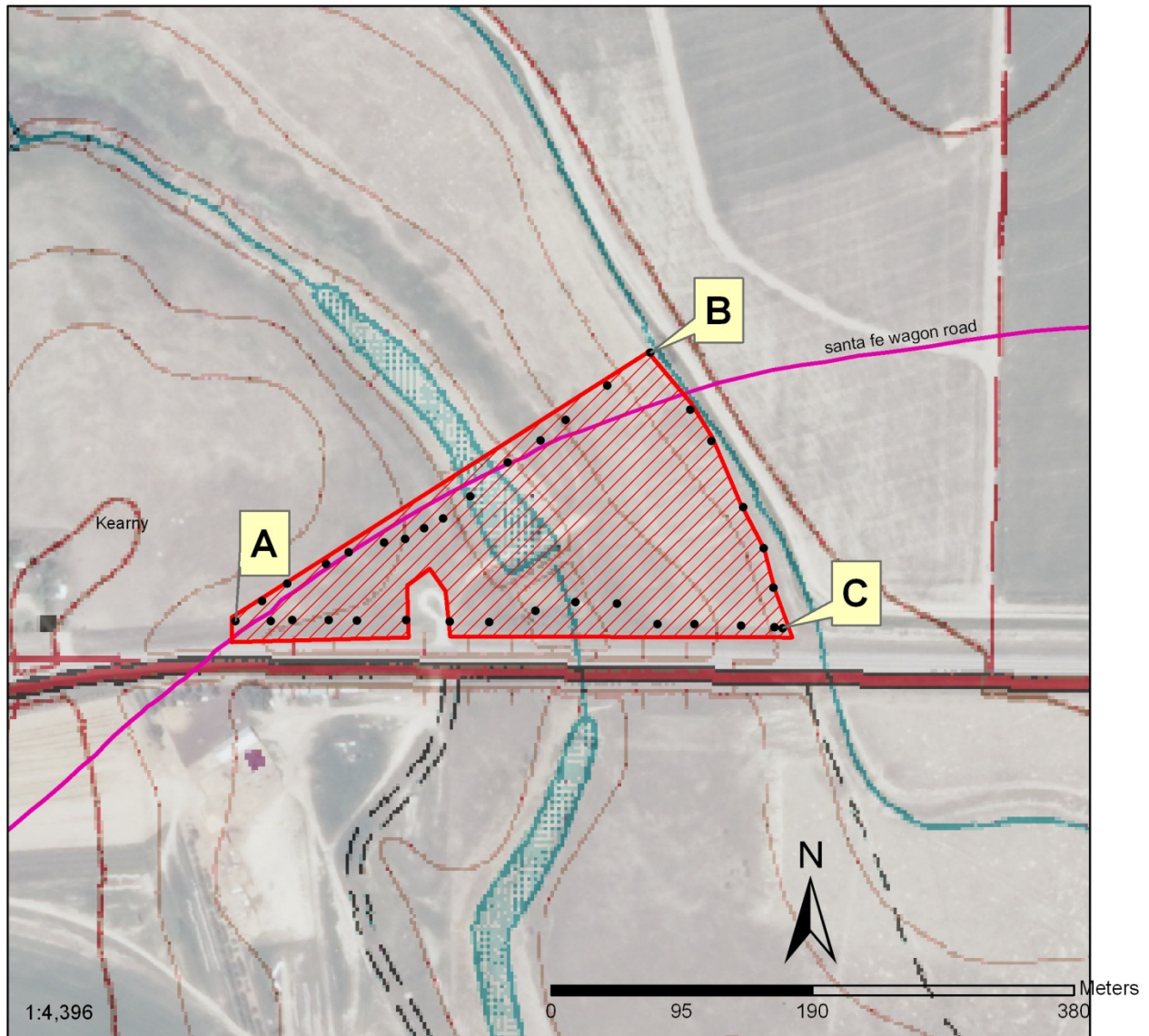
Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 (Charlie's Ruts).  
Santa Fe National Historic Trail brochure, National Park Service Official Map and Guide.  
Arrow indicates location of segment.

**Photograph Key Plan.**



Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 (Charlie's Ruts).  
2008 aerial image.  
Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI)  
<http://www.kshs.org/khri>  
Numbers correspond to photograph log.

### Site Boundary Map

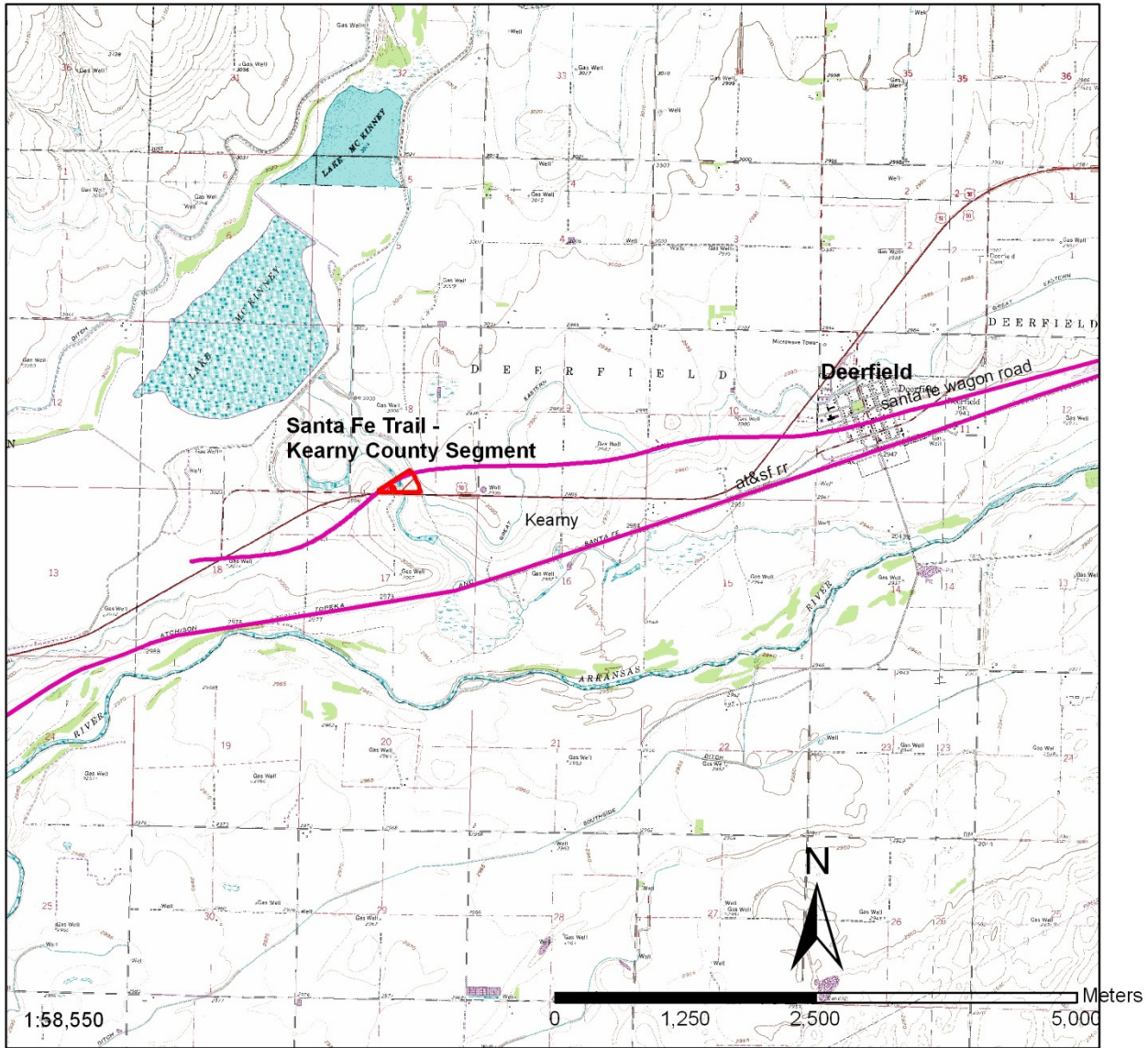


Santa Fe Trail - Kearny County Segment  
Deerfield vicinity, Kearny County, Kansas  
Black dots represent the GPS points taken in the field survey.  
GLO survey line also shown

Site Boundary Coordinates (Datum = WGS84)  
A: 37.973822,-101.186977  
B: 37.975637,-101.183602  
C: 37.973859,-101.182453

Total area: 11.17 acres (0.05 sqkm)

**Context Map**



Santa Fe Trail – Kearny County Segment 1 (Charlie's Ruts).  
Deerfield vicinity, Kearny County, Kansas  
Upper GLO line indicates the Santa Fe Trail; lower line indicates the location of the AT&SF Railroad.