

**National Register Listed
April 3, 2013**

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).**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

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)

LANDSCAPE/conservation area

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

Narrative Description

Summary

The Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2 is a linear corridor comprised of a single swale (14MT1115) of the Cimarron Route, as well as a 50 m (164 feet) contributing land area around the swale.¹ This linear 24.03-acre site is located about 10 miles northwest of Elkhart and 1.66 miles south of K-51 Highway in Morton County, Kansas, completely within the Cimarron National Grassland. The Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2 is a good example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as defined in the *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised multiple property nomination. Located in the SW1/4 of Section 4, Township 34 South, Range 43 West, this is one of the shortest identified segments within the Grassland.

Elaboration

The Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2 is a remnant of the Cimarron Route of the Santa Fe Trail, which played a key role in transportation of travelers and goods along the trail between 1822 and 1868. This swale leads to and away from Middle Spring and Point of Rocks. Dust storms produced a minor shift in vegetation during the Dust Bowl, with the most severe erosion in Morton County taking place between 1935 and 1938.² Despite the landscape changes, this site maintains a similar visual landscape to that of its period of significance (1822-1868).

Landscape³

Morton County is located within the High Plains section of the Great Plains province of the Interior Plains division of North America. 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.⁴ The prairie contains a growth of blue grama and buffalograss 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 Morton County is prairie, having intermittent patches of yucca (*Yucca spp.*) and buffalograss (*Buchloë dactyloides*) throughout the area. In the Cimarron National Grassland, sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*) and prickly pear (*Opuntia spp.*) are also prevalent.

This site – and the surrounding landscape – is relatively flat. Starting at an elevation of 1113 meters (3650 feet) at the western section line, the ground slopes slightly down to an elevation of 1109 meters (3640 feet) at the eastern end of the linear site. The swale is located in a rural area of Morton County and the viewshed from the nominated site shows minimal visual intrusions. The rural nature of this area and its conservation as a national grassland maintains the historic visual integrity of the site.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) maintains a protective corridor on either side of the trail which helps to protect and preserve this nationally significant trail yet still allow the USFS to meet its multiple use mandate. A gas well is located to the southeast of the site in the SE/4 of Section 4 but does not obstruct the site's visual integrity.

Trail Segment 14MT1115

Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. conducted a reconnaissance survey of several potential Santa Fe Trail swales in the Cimarron National Grassland for the USDA Forest Service in 2000. The purpose of this

¹ 14MT1115 is the Kansas State Historical Society's archeological site number for this resource.

² Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28, 30.

³ The following paragraph is adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

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

investigation was to determine the validity of proposed trail sites identified in 1990 by William Buckles and Kathie Arwood of the University of Southern Colorado.⁵ Alpine's survey report provides a basis for the summary of this swale.

Swale 14MT1115 is an example of a Transportation Site (Trail Segment subtype), as described in the revised multiple property nomination. Its western terminus begins about 50 meters (164 feet) east of the north-south fence line that divides sections 4 and 5. Beginning in the NW1/4, SW1/4 of Section 4, Township 34 South, Range 43 West, the swale stretches east through a formerly plowed agricultural field for a total of 760 meters (0.5 miles), ending in the center of the section. The swale has a variable width between 15 meters and 20 meters (49 feet and 66 feet) at its widest and about 8 meters (26 feet) at its narrowest. North-south Forest Service Road 664.A crosses the swale about 535 meters (1755 feet) east of its western terminus. The eastern terminus of the 3.55 acre-swale ends at a north-south fence line along the center of Section 4.⁶

Documented trail segments in western Kansas and in the Cimarron National Grassland have confirmed that the pattern of traffic in this region historically tended to follow the four parallel column formation. The single swale is all that remains of this pattern at this site. While the natural characteristics of the landscape contribute to the indistinctness of the swale's profile, the swale's visibility becomes much more evident due to slightly greener grass towards the eastern end in wetter seasons. Aerial imagery from 2008 shows the swale more clearly than during pedestrian survey (Figure 1).

The depressions worn into the ground from continuous use since 1822 were visible by 1834—an unusually wet year during which wagons left imprints in the landscape that would be replicated and reinforced by wagon trains in the succeeding years.⁷

⁵ Jonathon C. Horn, *Santa Fe Trail Documentation on the Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Montrose: Alpine Archeological Consultants, Inc., 2000), ii. See William G. Buckles and Kathie Arwood, *Investigations of the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas* (Pueblo: University of Southern Colorado, 1990) on file with the Kansas State Historical Society's Cultural Resources Division.

⁶ Horn, 42.

⁷ Leo E. Oliva, *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 17.

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Commerce

Period of Significance

1822-1868

Significant Dates

N/A

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, 1822-1868 was selected because it spans the years the Santa Fe Trail was active in this part of Kansas as a route of transportation and commerce.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

n/a

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2 is nationally significant as a historic resource of the Santa Fe Trail under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail from 1822 to 1868 and under Criterion D for its potential to yield information on the use of the trail during its period of significance. The trail segment and contributing land area retain a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. The period of significance begins with the initiation of wagon movement over this segment of the Cimarron Route in 1822 and ends with the arrival of the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad at the town of Sheridan, Kansas in June 1868. 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.

Elaboration

From 1821 to 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was a significant trade route between Missouri and New Mexico. Unlike other trails such as the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails, which served as a highway for emigrants bound for new homes in the far West, the bulk of traffic along the Santa Fe Trail consisted of civilian traders and military personnel. The Cimarron Route, which passed through what is now the Cimarron National Grassland, traversed 294 miles between its departure from the Mountain Route near Ingalls, Kansas and its reunification with the Mountain Route at La Junta (Watrous), New Mexico; 88 miles of the Cimarron Route were in Kansas, including a portion of the 60-mile waterless stretch known as *La Jornada*.

This trail segment is closely related to neighboring Point of Rocks and Middle Spring, which was the next reliable water source west of the Lower Cimarron (or Wagon Bed) Spring at the western end of *La Jornada*.⁸ A lack of reliable water sources contributed to difficult travel through *La Jornada*. With the Cimarron River containing only small pools of water after heavy rains, Middle Spring was a crucial stop for travelers.⁹ Almost all travelers looking for Middle Spring would have used neighboring Point of Rocks as a navigational aid. In evidence of this today, visible trail segments curve around Middle Spring and directly to the south of Point of Rocks. The Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2 is part of the Cimarron Route and is closely associated with Point of Rocks and Middle Spring, which are located approximately 3 and 5 miles, respectively, to the southeast of this segment.

Trail Traffic (1822-1868)

Although 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, not through this portion of Morton County. Becknell's second trading expedition in the spring of 1822, however, likely did pass this direction. This expedition included 21 men and three wagons – the first American attempt to use wagons on the trail.¹⁰ The use of wagons required the party to adopt a trail route that avoided the mountains Becknell used during his first trip; this new route followed what became the Cimarron Route in Morton County, Kansas

⁸ Lower Cimarron Spring is a National Historic Landmark (12/19/1960) and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (10/15/1966). Both the NHL and NR nominations are on file with the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

⁹ William E. Brown, *The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1988), 113.

¹⁰ Larry M. Beachum, *William Becknell, Father of the Santa Fe Trade* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982), 34; Larry M. Beachum, "To the Westward: William Becknell and the Beginning of the Santa Fe Trade," *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989): 9; Brown, 8; William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans Vol. I* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918-1919), 89.

(Figure 2).¹¹ From 1822 to the start of the Mexican-American War in 1846, the Cimarron Route was known as *the Santa Fe Trail* (in its various naming iterations) by traders between New Mexico and Missouri. During the Mexican-American War, users of the Cimarron Route were predominately the United States military. This route continued to see commercial and military traffic after the war until the Union Pacific Eastern Division reached the short-lived town of Sheridan, Kansas, in June 1868. Santa Fe-bound freight was shipped to this rail-end town approximately 140 miles north of Elkhart where it was then loaded onto wagons and hauled along the Mountain Route (Figure 3). The portion of the trail through Section 4 of Township 34 South, Range 43 West was completely abandoned by 1874. The General Land Office surveyors reached this area of Morton County in 1874 but did not include the trail on their survey maps.

Documented use of this route in Morton County occurred throughout the trail's history, specifically with the mention of Point of Rocks and Middle Spring. Traveler Josiah Gregg mentioned Middle Spring in his 1824 journal of the trail.¹² In 1825 surveyors George Sibley and Joseph C. Brown both made mention of Point of Rocks and Middle Spring in their journals and field notes in October 1825.¹³ During the Mexican-American War, US Captain Alexander B. Dyer mentioned Middle Spring in his field notes.¹⁴ In 1865, Kansas settler, Frank Stahl, was employed by Leavenworth contractor James Kerr to drive over 1100 head of cattle to Fort Union, New Mexico for the US military.¹⁵ Stahl passed Middle Spring in September 1865, noting it in his travel journal.¹⁶

Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. concluded that this swale is an impression left by traffic that traveled along the Cimarron Route to and from Santa Fe. 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 single swale is a surviving remnant of a route that likely would have had at least four parallel columns. As such, this swale and its contributing land area have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of the Cimarron Route through Morton County, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving trade patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both the remnant trail swale 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 the 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.¹⁷

¹¹ According to Josiah Gregg's 1844 "Map of the Indian Territory Northern Texas and New Mexico Showing the Great Western Plains," the "First Wagon Route" left Cool Spring (in present-day Oklahoma) and headed farther south of the Cimarron Route, crossing Arroyo de los Yutas and the Canadian River before arriving in San Jose, New Mexico where it rejoined the Cimarron Route into Santa Fe. The map is viewable on the University of Tulsa's website: <http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/speccoll/collections/maps/gregg/Gregg%20%20complete.jpg> (accessed 29 February 2012).

¹² See Appendix B in the multiple property nomination.

¹³ Kate L. Gregg, ed. *The Road to Santa Fe: the Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of a Road from the Missouri Frontier to the Settlements of New Mexico, 1825-1827* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1952), 92, 258.

¹⁴ See Appendix D in the multiple property nomination.

¹⁵ William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* Vol. III (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918-1919), 1316.

¹⁶ Francis (Frank) M. Stahl, John Meredith, trans., *Santa Fe Trail Diary: Cattle drive from Leavenworth, Kansas to Fort Union, New Mexico* (Unpublished, 1865, 2008), 12 [electronic transcription on-line]; available from <http://www.frankstahlbio.net/Frank%20Stahl%20Santa%20Fe%20Trail%20diary%20transcription.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 June 2012.

¹⁷ Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail Multiple Property Documentation Form (Revised)*. August 2012, F116.

Point of Rocks and Middle Spring were both key stops along the Cimarron Route for Santa Fe Trail travelers and remain central components to the associated trail segments throughout the Cimarron National Grassland, including the Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Beachum, Larry M. "To the Westward: William Becknell and the Beginning of the Santa Fe Trade," *Journal of the West* 28 (April 1989).
- Beachum, Larry M. *William Becknell, Father of the Santa Fe Trade*. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982.
- Brown, William E. *The Santa Fe Trail: National Park Service 1963 Historic Sites Survey*. St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1988.
- Buckles, William G. and Kathie Arwood. *Investigations of the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas*. University of Southern Colorado, 1990.
- Connelley, William E. *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* Vol. I & III. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918-1919.
- Gregg, Kate L. ed. *The Road to Santa Fe: the Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of a Road from the Missouri Frontier to the Settlements of New Mexico, 1825-1827*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1952.
- Horn, Jonathon C. *Santa Fe Trail Documentation on the Cimarron National Grassland, Morton County, Kansas*. Montrose: Alpine Archeological Consultants, Inc., 2000.
- 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.
- Oliva, Leo E. *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.
- Stahl, Francis (Frank) M. John Meredith, transcriber. *Santa Fe Trail Diary: Cattle drive from Leavenworth, Kansas to Fort Union, New Mexico*. Unpublished, 1865, 2008 (trans), 12 [electronic transcription on-line]; available from <http://www.frankstahlbio.net/Frank%20Stahl%20Santa%20Fe%20Trail%20diary%20transcription.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 June 2012.
- Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

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 24.03
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Map Datum: WGS84

A: 37.117427,-102.007266
B: 37.117745,-102.003902

C: 37.117534,-102.001319
D: 37.117593,-101.998969

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

A linear 24.03-acre site in the N/2, SW/2 S4-T34S-R43W.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the documented archeological site 14MT1115 and a 50 meter (164 feet) contributing land area around the sites as required in the revised multiple property nomination.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John R. Barry & Amanda K. Loughlin

organization Kansas Historical Society

date July 2012

street & number 6425 SW 6th Ave

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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:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2

City or Vicinity: Elkhart vicinity

County/State: Morton County, Kansas

Photographer: Dr. Michelle Stevens

Date of Photos: March 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 3: View west across 14MT1115, from eastern terminus.

2 of 3: View east across 14MT1115, from near center.

3 of 3: View east across 14MT1115, from western terminus.

Property Owner:

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

name USDA Forest Service (c/o Dr. Michelle Stevens)

street & number 242 HWY 56 E, PO Box 300

telephone (620)697-4621

city or town Elkhart

state KS

zip code 67950

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 – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2.
2008 aerial view (no scale). Arrows indicate location of swale, visible as a darker line within the landscape; dot is approximate location of western terminus.
SW/4 S4-T34S-R43W
Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (kshs.org/khri).
Accessed 10 April 2012.

Figure 2.



Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2.

Detail of “Map of the Indian Territory Northern Texas and New Mexico Showing the Great Western Plains.” Box indicates general location of the nominated segment.

Josiah Gregg.

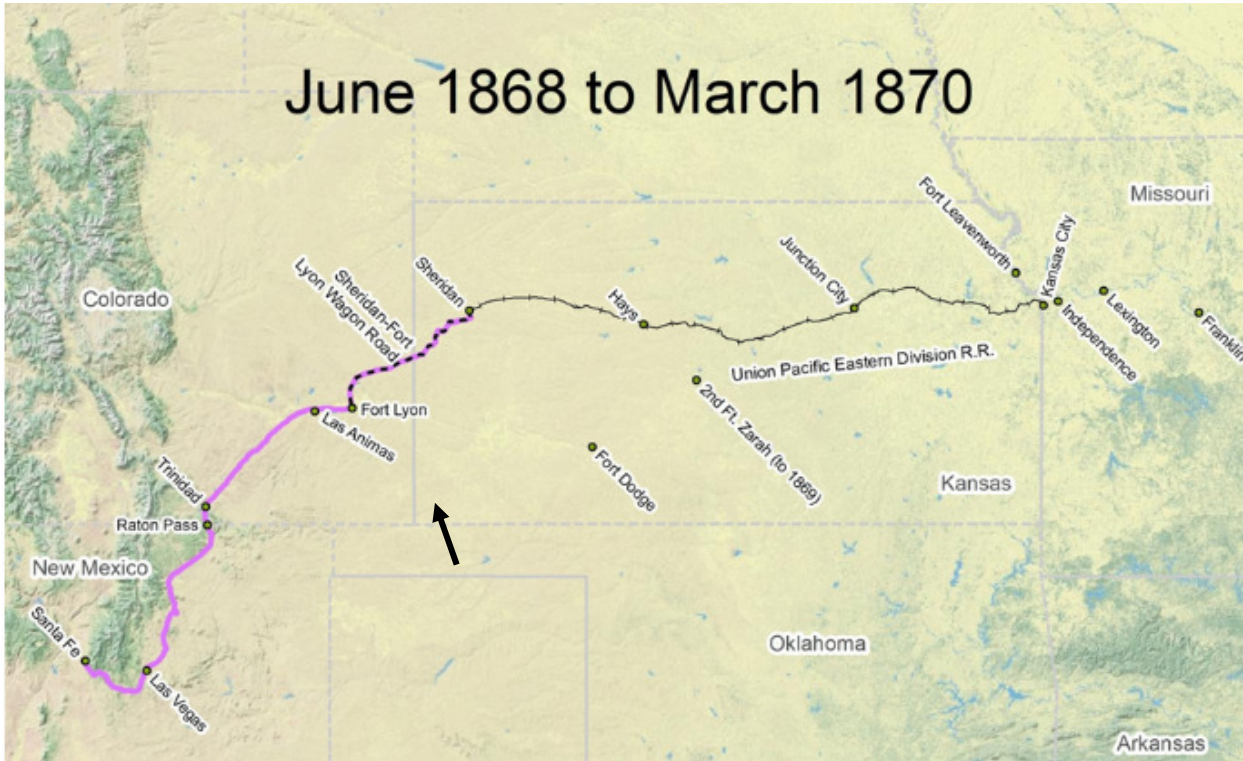
1844.

The University of Tulsa's website:

<http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/speccoll/collections/maps/gregg/Gregg%20%20complete.jpg>

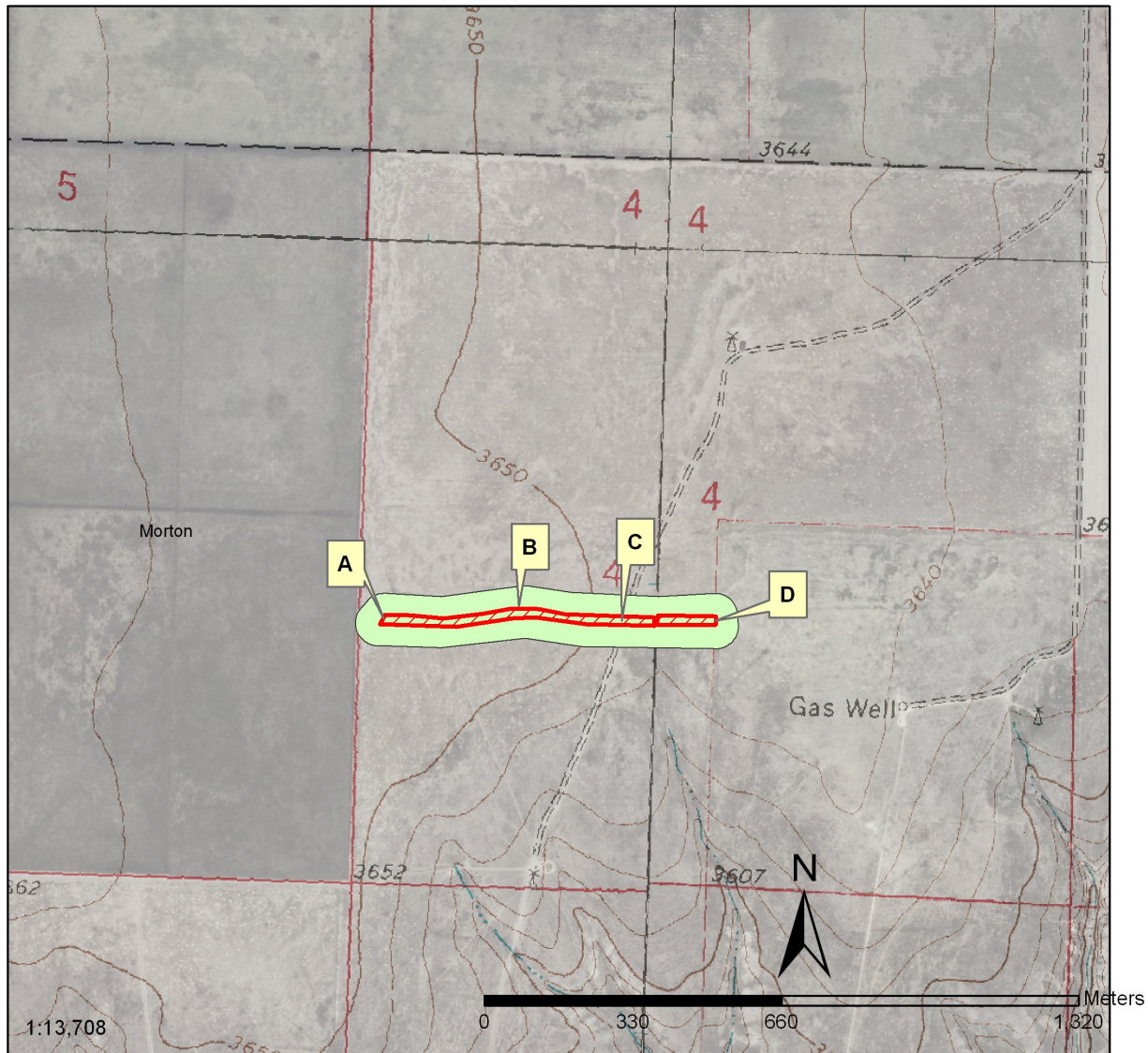
(accessed 29 February 2012).

Figure 3.



Santa Fe Trail – Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2.
Arrow indicates general location of nominated site.
June 1868-March 1870 Timeline Map of the Santa Fe Trail.
National Park Service GIS.
<http://www.nps.gov/safe/historyculture/map-timeline-3.htm>
Accessed 9 October 2012.

Boundary Map.



Santa Fe Trail - Cimarron National Grassland Segment 2
Elkhart vicinity, Morton County, Kansas

Site Coordinates (Datum = WGS84):

A: 37.117427,-102.007266 (Western Terminus of Recorded Site)

B: 37.117756,-102.003902

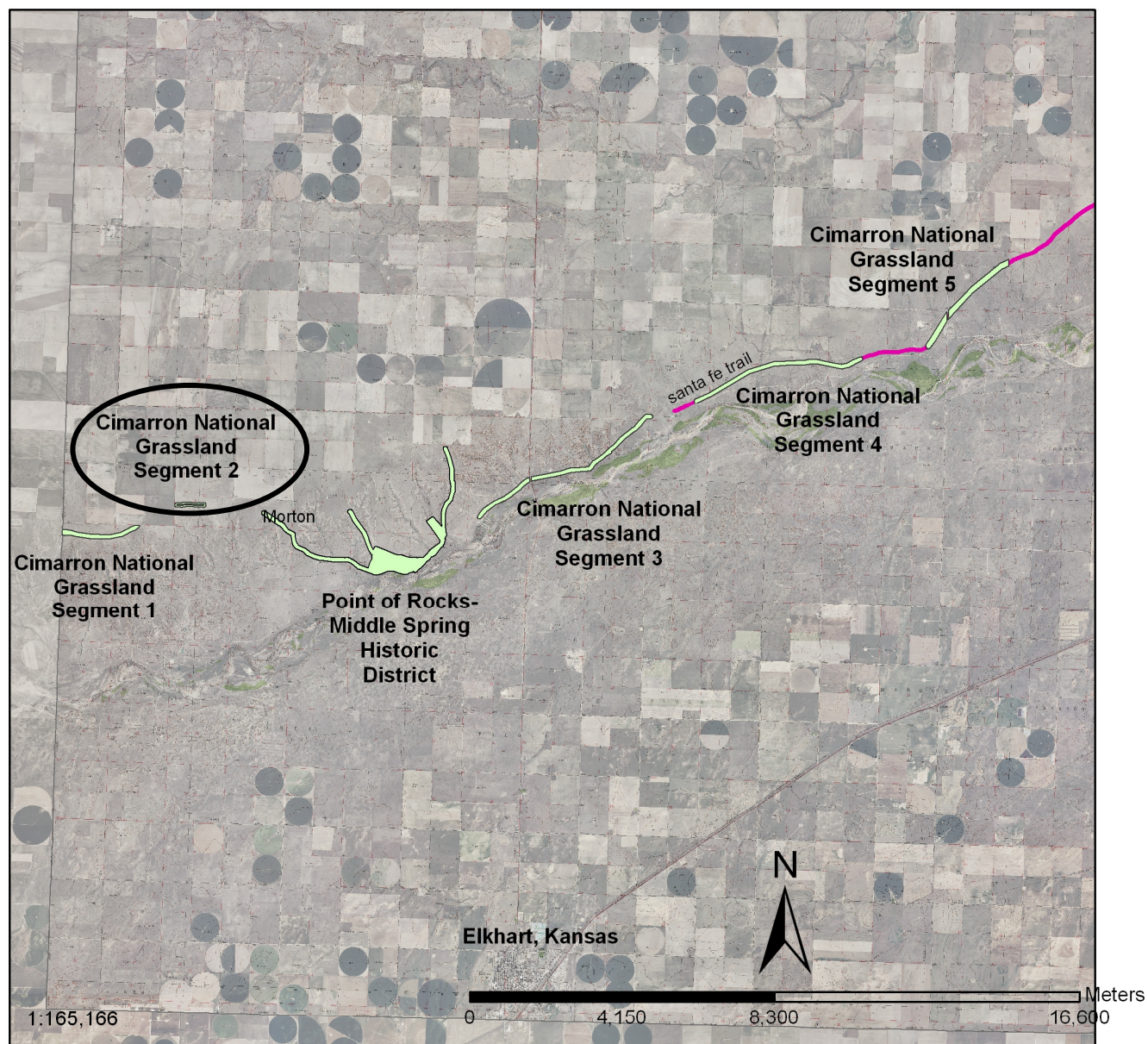
C: 37.117534,-102.001319 (Two-track Road)

D: 37.117593,-101.998969 (Eastern Terminus of Recorded Site)

Total area of segment: 24.03 acres (0.10 sqkm)

Total area of swale: 3.55 acres (0.11 sqkm)

Contextual Map.



The Santa Fe Trail in
the Cimarron National Grassland
Elkhart vicinity, Morton County, Kansas