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 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 (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Yellowstone River Bridge

Other names/site number Fallon Bridge, 24PE618, MDT No. L40114001+05001

2. Location

street & number Milepost 1 on I-94 Frontage Road (Old US Highway 10) ☐ not for publication

city of town 1 mile northeast of Fallon ☒ vicinity

State Montana code MT county Prairie code 079 zip code 59326

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** _x__**local**

Signature of certifying official Date

Title State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

___ 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:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

	private
	public - Local
X	public - State
	public - Federal
	private

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

	building(s)
	district
	site
X	structure
	building(s)
	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	**Total**

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

Montana's Historic Steel Truss Bridges

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

9

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: Continuous Warren through truss

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete
walls:
roof:
other: Steel , Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Yellowstone River Bridge near the community of Fallon is a 2-span riveted continuous steel Warren through truss. The bridge is 1,142 feet in length and 29.9 feet wide and rests on three concrete piers. Built between 1943 and 1944, the bridge was one of only a very few major bridge projects undertaken by the Montana Highway Department during World War II. The bridge is a component of US Highway 10, a highway deemed strategically important to the nation's defense during the war. The setting of the structure is nearly intact, but was somewhat diminished by the construction of nearby Interstate 94 in 1978. It is the most massive continuous span through truss and one of the last truss bridges built by the highway department. The bridge is distinguished by its long, massive spans rising above the eastern Montana prairie.

Narrative Description

The Fallon Bridge is located in the lower Yellowstone Valley of southeastern Montana. The bridge crosses the Yellowstone River on old US Highway 10 about one mile north of Fallon in Prairie County, Montana. The bridge is located on Tertiary sandstones and mudstones that are known as the Fort Union Formation. The formation consists of terrestrial sediments that were deposited adjacent to an inland seaway from 65 to 55 million years ago. The terrain encompassing the Fallon Bridge is rolling plains broken by drainages, gullies, small ravines, and buttes. Vegetation consists of grasslands that originally fed bison, but is now used primarily for cattle grazing and some small irrigated agricultural operations. The highway and bridge was bypassed by Interstate 94 in 1978. The Northern Pacific Railway (now Burlington Northern- Santa Fe Railroad) main line parallels the highway on the north.[1]

The Yellowstone River Bridge near Fallon is a 2-span continuous Warren through truss structure. It is 1,142 feet long and 29.9 feet wide with a roadway width of 28 feet. The bridge is comprised of two 570-foot spans. The substructure consists of three solid flared concrete abutments with extended caps. The bridge rests on reinforced concrete abutments and cast steel rocker bearings. The inclined endposts are channel sections with batten plates. The upper chords consist of laced channel sections with batten plates with a continuous steel plate riveted to the top flanges of the channel sections. The lower chords are laced channel sections with batten plates. The verticals are laced channel sections. The diagonals are alternating laced channel sections with batten plates and channel sections with batten plates. The portal braces are laced channel sections and laced angle sections providing an overhead clearance of 15 feet. The sway braces are angle sections, while the top lateral braces and struts are laced angle sections. The concrete deck is supported steel I-beam stringers resting on steel I-beam floor beams. The bottom sway braces are angle sections. The deck is flanked by low concrete curbs with drains and the guardrails are steel channel sections mounted on steel I-beam posts bolted to the outside stringers.

Integrity

The bridge is an excellent example of a continuous span through truss structure with all of its original structural features intact and unchanged since its construction in the mid-1940s. It retains its original configuration and materials. There have been no modifications made to the bridge and all of its structural components are present and functioning in their original capacity. The bridge still functions as an important Yellowstone River crossing on the I-94 frontage road (formerly US Highway 10). With the exception of the presence of the nearby Interstate, there have been no significant changes in the setting of the bridge. It retains integrity of design, materials and function and is representative of the Montana Highway Department's bridge-building program from 1933 to 1946.

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[1] David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, Roadside Geology of Montana, (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991), 363-364.

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)

- [X] 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.
- [X] 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 owed 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)

Engineering
Transportation

Period of Significance

1944-1959

Significant Dates

1944

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Montana Highway Department
William P. Roscoe Company

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for this structure includes its construction date and the period in which it served as a primary component of US Highway 10 in eastern Montana.

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of signficance and applicable criteria)

The Fallon Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The bridge is eligible under Criterion A because of its association with the national war effort during World War II to keep a strategic crossing open on a route important to the national defense. During the war, the Montana Highway Department's road and bridge construction programs were nascent because of shortages in oil, gasoline, steel and manpower. Because it was important to the national defense to keep the route (US Highway 10) between Minneapolis and Seattle open, the War Department approved the Montana Highway Department's plan to construct a bridge across the Yellowstone River in southeastern Montana. The story behind the construction of the Fallon Bridge is representative of the problems and triumphs of many state agencies and contractors hampered by wartime restrictions. The bridge also was the culmination of the highway department's Great Depression-era programs to provide efficient and modern roads and bridges for both private use and commerce. The bridge is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as the biggest and best-designed of the continuous through truss spans built in Montana by the highway department between 1933 and 1946. The bridge retains all of its original structural components, its historic appearance and essentially its historic function as an important river crossing in southeastern Montana. The bridge is intact and unchanged and conveys its historic appearance. Other than age and routine maintenance by highway forces, there are no substantial modifications or alterations to it.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The Fallon Bridge is significant on a number of levels. It is one of only eight continuous span steel through truss bridges constructed in Montana between 1933 and 1946. It is also the longest and most massive and is an excellent representative of the type. The bridge was built from standardized designs developed by the Montana Highway Department in 1933 and adapted specifically for this site. Continuous through trusses became the standard highway department structure for wide river crossings in the 1930s and were utilized for that purpose until 1946 when the department built its last truss structure (24PE1810). The bridge, moreover, was constructed during World War II when virtually all of the Montana State Highway Commission's road and bridge programs had been cancelled because of wartime restrictions. The bridge replaced an earlier structure that had been damaged; its location on a highway of strategic significance (U.S. Highway 10) was the catalyst that led to its construction during a time of wartime shortages in materials such as steel. The bridge is not only important for its location on a strategic highway during World War II, but was also significant to the development of agriculture in southeastern Montana and as an important component of Montana's primary east-west highway, US Highway 10.

The Fallon Bridge is also eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it is a stunning and intact example of the type of standardized continuous Warren through truss spans that the Montana Highway Department built in Montana from 1933 to 1946. Continuous spans were used for river crossings more than 1,000 feet in width. The design was particularly adaptable to different crossing conditions and was easy to build and affordable to the state. There have been no structural modifications to the bridge and vehicular collisions have not significantly damaged any important structural components. The bridge retains its historic appearance and configuration with all of its original structural components and features intact along with its association with US Highway 10. The bridge, moreover, still functions as the most direct access across the Yellowstone River at Fallon.

Engineering Significance

In 1933, the Montana Highway Department began designing and constructing continuous span through truss span bridges during the Great Depression. The Fallon Bridge was the fifth bridge of this type built by the department and, by far, the biggest. It is exemplary of the continuous through truss type which was built primarily at wide river crossings. All but one of the continuous through truss bridges, including the first in 1933, were built by prolific Billings, Montana contractor William P. Roscoe. The continuous span bridge was well-suited to better accommodating traffic demands than the old multi-span riveted Warren through trusses. Indeed, the style still accommodates modern traffic demands with three of the six continuous span bridges in Montana still extant and functioning in their original capacity. At 1,142 feet in length, the Fallon Bridge is the longest and most massive of the continuous span bridges built by the Montana Highway Department during the golden age of bridge building from 1933 to 1946.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

In early 1943, the Montana Highway Commission announced plans to construct a bridge over the Yellowstone River near Fallon. The original bridge, a through truss built in 1912, had largely been destroyed by an ice jam on the river rendering it unsuitable for use (two spans of the bridge were relocated to Carbon County in 1947 and used as crossings of the Clark's Fork River at Chance and south of the community of Belfry [24CB1505]). Shortly after the Commission's announcement,

however, a delegation from Dawson County petitioned the Commission for the construction of the bridge at an alternate site near Marsh in that county. The proposed new site, the delegation argued, would be more convenient for the many sugar beet farmers living near Marsh than it would for the people of Fallon. Marsh was hardly more than a railroad siding and post office that had been established in 1910.[2]

The highway commissioners were decidedly against the Marsh site for the bridge. It felt that the site would add 10 miles to U.S. Highway 10 and delay construction of the new bridge. The Commission also stated that a bridge at Marsh would cost between 25 – 40 percent more than a bridge at Fallon. Finally, and importantly, the federal Public Roads Administration (the wartime successor to the Bureau of Public Roads) and the Army Corps of Engineers had already approved the Fallon site for the structure. The Commission tabled the discussion of the Marsh site and immediately called for bids to construct a bridge across the Yellowstone River at Fallon. Because of constraints placed on road and bridge construction by World War II, the approval for construction had also to be approved by the War Production Board. Highway 10's status as a strategic highway expedited the Board's approval of the project.[3]

The Commission awarded the contract to the W. P. Roscoe Company of Billings for $395,568.30 on October 25, 1943. The bridge's components were fabricated by the Bethlehem Steel Company and the Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company – both subsidiaries of U.S. Steel. With the bridge nearing completion in November 1944, pressure was placed on the Commission and Roscoe to open the bridge before it was completed. By November 19th, the only thing remaining was the painting of the structure. Roscoe was loath to open the bridge before it was painted as the traffic would interfere with the process. He did, however, intimate to the Commission that if it was willing to extend his contract, he would open the bridge as soon as possible and finish painting it with the traffic. The Commission agreed with Roscoe and authorized the contract extension. The bridge was opened for traffic on December 11, 1944. The bridge was bypassed by the construction of Interstate 94 in 1978.[4]

William P. Roscoe Company

Few men have had as big an impact on Montana's construction industry as William P. Roscoe. For thirty years, from 1926 to 1956, Roscoe built more bridges in Montana than any other contractor employed by the Montana Highway Department. Although he specialized in the construction of large steel bridges, Roscoe also built reinforced concrete and timber bridges all over the state. Bridges built by his company include the Missouri River Bridge near Wolf Creek, and Yellowstone River bridges at Reed Point, Forsyth, and Glendive.[5]

Born in Wadena, Minnesota in February, 1886, William P. Roscoe dropped out of school in 1902 and worked in South Dakota as a cowboy for several years. In 1905, he returned to Minnesota and went to work for William and Arthur Hewett's Security Bridge Company. Unlike Montana's bridge engineers, who learned their trade in colleges and universities, the state's most successful bridge contractors learned their craft in the field from other bridge-builders. Roscoe went to work for the Hewett's as a laborer. Within a few years, he worked his way up to foreman and, by October 1915, was the company's vice president when the Hewett's moved Security's headquarters to Billings. Roscoe continued his association with the Security Bridge Company until 1925, when he formed the W. P. Roscoe Company in Billings. William and Arthur Hewett dissolved the Security Bridge Company in 1926.[6]

During his thirty year career, the Roscoe company built bridges throughout Montana and was one of the only contractors from which the highway department bridge engineers sought advice on construction problems. Bill Roscoe died in 1956. Soon after his death, Roscoe's family reorganized the company and formed Roscoe Steel and Culvert Company. Although the company no longer builds bridges, it still provides components for steel bridges in Montana and the United States.[7]

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[2] Montana State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes, Book 9, 4 (October 25, 1943); Construction File Project No. SN-FAP 130-B, Unit 2, Montana Department of Transportation, Helena, Montana.
[3] Meeting Minute Books, Ibid, 16-17, 31.
[4] Meeting Minute Books, Ibid, , 1944: 39-40; 129-130; Bridge Construction File, Project No. SN-FAP 130-B, Unit 2.
[5] Jon Axline, Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860-1956, (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2005), 113-114.
[6] Tom Stout, *Montana: Its Story and Biography*, Volume 2 (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921), 221-222; Fredric Quivik, *Historic Bridges of Montana*, (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1982), 43.
[7] Interview with Jim Roscoe by author, April 2004; Quivik, *Historic Bridges*, 43.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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
_X_Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **Montana Department of Transportation**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References (
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	491174 (NAD 27)	5188924 (NAD 27)	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary for the Yellowstone River Bridge measures 1,142 x 25 feet. The boundary encompasses the bridge and its approaches on both sides of the Yellowstone River for a distance of 120 feet off each end of the bridge. The boundary is centered on the bridge.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Boundaries for the Yellowstone River Bridge are drawn to encompass the bridge spans, its immediate approaches and that portion of the Yellowstone River spanned by the bridge. The width is increased beyond the measurements of the structure to include the piers and abutments.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jon Axline/Historian
organization Montana Department of Transportation date September 13, 2009
street & number 2701 Prospect Avenue telephone (406) 444-6258
city or town Helena state MT zip code 59620-1001
e-mail jaxline@mt.gov

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:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white 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.

See continuation pages

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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Bibliography

Alt, David and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*. (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991).

Axline, Jon. *Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860 - 1956*. (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2005).

Bridge Inspection File No. L40114001+05001. Montana Department of Transportation, Helena.

Construction File No. SN-FAP 130-B(4), Unit 2. Montana Department of Transportation, Helena.

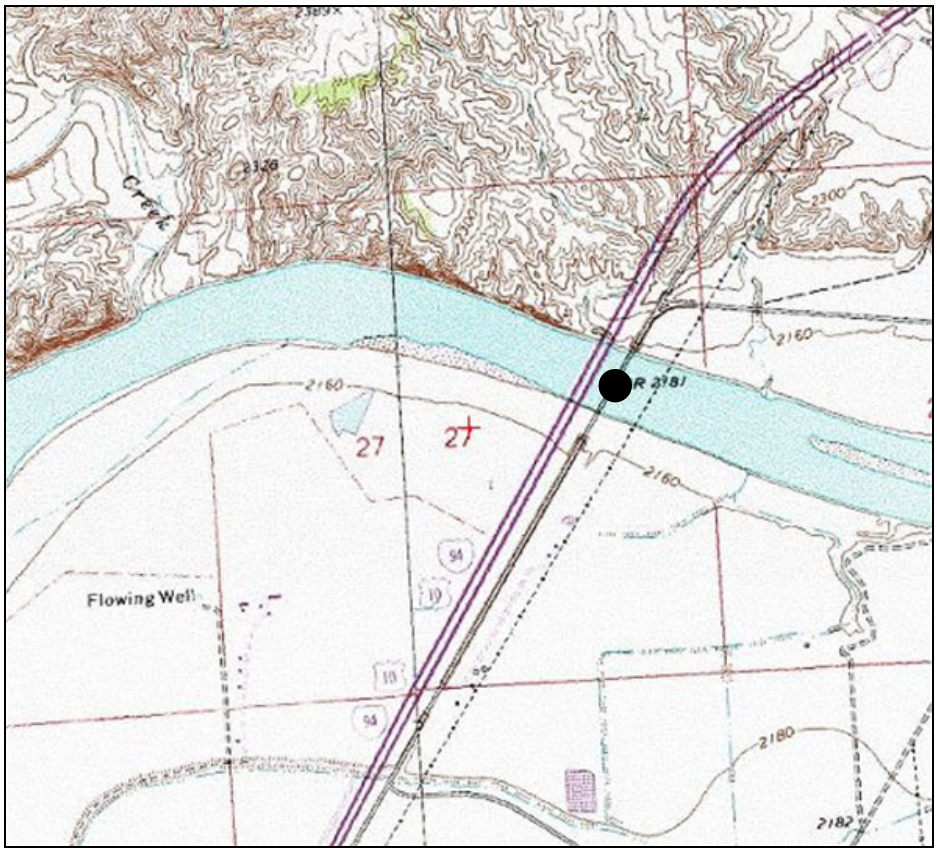
Roscoe, Jim. Interview by Jon Axline, Montana Department of Transportation, April 2004.

Terry (Montana) *Tribune*, January 1943 – January 1945. Montana Historical Society, Helena.

Quivik, Fredric. *Historic Bridges of Montana*. (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1982).

State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes. Volume 9. Montana Department of Transportation, Helena.

Stout, Tom. *Montana: Its Story and Biography*. Three volumes (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921).



Location of Yellowstone River Bridge (T13N R52E, S27 Fallon 7.5' quadrangle map, 1983)

Name: Yellowstone River Bridge (24PE618)
County and State: Prairie County, Montana
Photographer: Kristi Hager
Date of Photograph: June 2005
Location of original negative: Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.
Description and view of camera: Yellowstone River Bridge. South profile of truss spans and east portal. View to the northwest.
Photograph: 0001

Name: Yellowstone River Bridge (24PE618)
County and State: Prairie County, Montana
Photographer: Kristi Hager
Date of Photograph: June 2005
Location of original negative: Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.
Description and view of camera: Yellowstone River Bridge. View to the east.
Photograph: 0002

Photograph 0001. Yellowstone River Bridge. South profile and east portal. View to the northwest.

Photograph 0002. Yellowstone River Bridge. View to the east.