

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 1-24-07

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge

other names/site number Site #SA0153

2. Location

street & number North side of Arkansas Highway 183, approximately 1/4 mile east of Pine Haven Road not for publication

city or town Bauxite vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Saline code 125 zip code 72011

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge

Saline County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

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 count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Contributing Noncontributing

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: buildings, sites, structures, Total. Values: 1, 1

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 Bridges of Arkansas

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/road-related(vehicular)/bridge

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Concrete deck truss

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE/fieldstone

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge

Name of Property

Saline County, Arkansas

County and State

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

c.1919-c.1945

Significant Dates

c.1919-c.1945

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, National Historic Landmark, Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal Agency, Local Government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge
Name of Property

Saline County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>545591</u> Easting	<u>3824257</u> Northing	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 27, 2006
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Alcoa - Arkansas Operations
street & number 4701 Alcoa Road telephone _____
city or town Bauxite state AR zip code 72011

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge is located adjacent to the north side of Arkansas Highway 183 at the crossing of an unnamed creek approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the community of Cincinnati. Comprised of one concrete deck truss span, the bridge has a total length of approximately 15 feet.

ELABORATION

The bridge is accessed from both the east and west. The concrete deck truss is very utilitarian in nature, consisting of a flat concrete slab. The thickness of the slab, along with its short span, also suggests that it may not have any reinforcing in it.

The Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge consists of a single concrete deck truss span measuring approximately 15 feet. The travel surface and overall width of the bridge is approximately 18 feet. The deck surface is concrete, although it is currently covered with fallen leaves and other natural debris. The abutments are concrete and project out diagonally from the ends of the bridge. The bridge and abutments rest on a cast-concrete slab foundation. Resting on top of the deck is a pair of fieldstone guardrails that run the entire length of the bridge on the north and south sides.

INTEGRITY

No structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Its location remains rural, and its setting remains pristine. The bridge still illustrates its original design and materials. Although the bridge is no longer in use, and the associated roadbed has become overgrown, it is still possible to discern the roadbed's location to the east and west of the bridge.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Constructed c.1919, the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of vehicular transportation in Saline County and the Bauxite vicinity. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

ELABORATION

Settlement in Saline County began in early 1815 with the arrival of William Lockert and his family, who settled about four miles southwest of Benton where the Military Road crossed the Saline River. Other settlers soon followed into the area, most notably Ezra M. Owen who began the settlement of Collegeville c.1823. Owen had plans for a school that he hoped would become the state university, which was the reason for the community's name. (The prominence of the community almost made it the state capital in 1836, losing the title by only a few votes.) By 1835, enough people had settled in the area that Saline County was formed from Pulaski County, and included large portions of current Grant, Perry and Garland counties.¹

From the earliest days of the county's settlement a system of roads existed in Saline County. By 1839, although there were no roads in what would become the Bauxite area, roads did travel southwest across Saline County linking Little Rock with Collegeville and then splitting with one proceeding on to Benton, Rockport and Washington, and the other going to Hot Springs.²

The road network in Saline County expanded by 1854, adding a road that went southeast from Benton to Losur. In addition, a road now linked the settlement of Friendship in the northeastern part of the county with Tulip in neighboring Dallas County. At the same time, railroads had also started to appear in Saline County with a line crossing the county connecting Little Rock with the southwestern part of the state.³

Benton had been an established community from Saline County's earliest days. Joshua Smith opened a store in the area in 1834, and he began a partnership with William Calvert in 1837. Additional businesses, including other general merchants and a hotel, also opened in the area, and Benton was incorporated in April 1839. When a board of commissioners, consisting of Rezin Davis, Green B. Hughes, and David Dodd was elected to select the seat of government, they chose Benton because of its central location, and being in the

¹ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pp. 231, 233, and 237.

² Burr, David. H. *Map of Mississippi, Louisiana & Arkansas exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, rail roads, &c.* Map. London: J. Arrowsmith, 1839.

³ *Colton's Railroad & Township Map of Arkansas Compiled from the U.S. Surveys and Other Authentic Sources*. Map. Unknown Publisher, New York, 1854.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

most thickly settled part of the county. The community continued to grow and had 900 residents by the late 1880s.⁴

The community of Sardis, also known as Hurricane at various points in its history, was also an early community in the eastern part of Saline County. Little is known about its early history, but it is known that Hurricane was large enough to have a post office by 1860. The post office remained until 1908 when the mail was then sent to Mabelvale. Although the community was known as Sardis at the time of the bridge's construction, it was labeled as Hurricane on the 1936 Saline County map.⁵

Settlement in the immediate vicinity of the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge began in earnest after the discovery of bauxite by John C. Branner, the state geologist. In 1897, the General Bauxite Company built a mill in the area to process the ore, which was then taken by wagon to Bryant where it was loaded into railcars. In 1901, the railroad extended its lines into the area, which brought about a need for more workers, many of whom settled in the area. Two years later, an ore-drying plant was built and the General Bauxite Company also laid out a company town on its land that included churches, stores, schools, roads, and other facilities. The community of Bauxite continued to grow, especially in the World War I era, when the war effort brought an increased need for aluminum and more companies moved into the area.⁶

The growth of the Bauxite area in the 1910s brought about the need for new and improved roads to aid in the transportation of the Bauxite ore. According to the *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways, and Improvements*, "Saline County has more good gravel available for her roads than any county in the state and a good deal has been accomplished in its use on the roads in the vicinity of Benton and Bauxite."⁷ However, more needed to be constructed.

In 1919, the State Highway Department, under the Alexander Road Law, conducted a survey for a 15.32 mile-long gravel road from Benton through Bauxite and Sardis to intersect with the Little Rock-Sheridan Road (current U.S. 167). The estimated cost for the completion of the road was \$120,164.48.⁸ According to the *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*, "the Alexander Road Law clearly specified the procedure to be

⁴ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pp. 236-237.

⁵ Arkansas State Highway Commission. *General Highway and Transportation Map, Saline County, Arkansas*. 1936 and Baker, Russell Pierce. *From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory of Arkansas Post Offices, 1832-1971*. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Genealogical Society, 1988, p. 112.

⁶ Hill, Julie. *Arkansas State Rock: Bauxite*. c.2002. Found at:

http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/butlercenter/lesson_plans/lesson%20plans/Lesson%20plans-retained/Arkansas%20state%20rock.pdf

⁷ *Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways, and Improvements*. Publisher unknown, c.1918, p. 76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

followed to create a road improvement district and fixed the amount of money that could be raised against real property as 30% of the total assessed value of the property within the district. The result was that neighbors along a particular route could form a road improvement district, contract out for the construction, borrow the money to finance the project, and in effect, mortgage their property as a debt guarantee."⁹

The Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge was built as a part of the new road, and employed the latest design characteristics for bridges at the time. The *Fifth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*, which was published c.1922, stated with respect to bridge width that, "In the past it has generally been assumed that a bridge, having a sixteen-foot roadway was ample to take care of all ordinary highway traffic. The impetus given truck transportation by the construction of improved roads has practically forced the construction on main highways of bridges with an eighteen-foot clear roadway and in some cases it has been desirable to make them wider."¹⁰ However, unlike most bridges of the period, which were constructed entirely out of concrete, the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge employed fieldstone for the construction of its guardrails, a material that was prevalent in Saline County and also one that gave the bridge a decorative touch.

Although the Benton-Sardis Road was the latest in highway design when it was built and met the needs of the Bauxite area in the 1910s and 1920s, by the 1940s it became inadequate. As in World War I, the onset of World War II brought about an increased need for aluminum. To meet the increased demand for aluminum, bauxite mining increased astronomically and the population of the Bauxite area followed suit. In 1943, the Republic Mining and Manufacturing Company increased its workforce from 250 to 4,200. A new plant was built to employ 5,000 people and to house the new employees barracks style apartments were built along with houses for managers. Also by 1943, the population of Bauxite surpassed 6,000.¹¹

To meet the needs of the Bauxite area residents and mining companies, improved highways had to be brought to the area. By 1945, a new highway, Arkansas Highway 183, was beginning to appear on the state highway system map. Initially, it traveled south from U.S. 70 to the northeast of Bauxite, although it did not reach the community. However, by 1948, the highway was shown as going through Bauxite and connecting with Arkansas Highway 35, U.S. 70, and U.S. 67 at Benton to the west.¹² The completion of Arkansas

⁹ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*. Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992, p. 20.

¹⁰ *Fifth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements*. Little Rock: H.G. Pugh & Co., c.1922, p. 52.

¹¹ Hill, Julie. *Arkansas State Rock: Bauxite*. c.2002. Found at:

http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/butlercenter/lesson_plans/lesson%20plans/Lesson%20plans-retained/Arkansas%20state%20rock.pdf.

¹² Arkansas State Highway Commission. *Official Highway Map of Arkansas*. Maps. 1942 and 1945-1948.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Highway 183 allowed easy access to Bauxite from U.S. 70 to the northeast and Arkansas Highway 35, U.S. 67 and U.S. 70 to the west and allowed easier transportation of the ore from the area.

Since the completion of the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge c.1919, no structural alterations have been made to the bridge to compromise its integrity. Today, although the Benton-Sardis Road has been bypassed by Arkansas Highway 183, the old roadbed is visible in the vicinity of the bridge. The Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge is a rare example of an early concrete highway bridge, and it remains as an important reminder of early transportation in the Bauxite area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed c.1919, the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of vehicular transportation in Saline County and the Bauxite vicinity. This nomination is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Arkansas" and under associated historic context "Early Transportation Era."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Colton's Railroad & Township Map of Arkansas Compiled from the U.S. Surveys and Other Authentic Sources. Map. Unknown Publisher, New York, 1854.

Fifth Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways and Improvements. Little Rock: H.G. Pugh & Co., c.1922.

Hill, Julie. *Arkansas State Rock: Bauxite*. c.2002. Found at:
http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/butlercenter/lesson_plans/lesson%20plans/Lesson%20plans-retained/Arkansas%20state%20rock.pdf.

Third Biennial Report of the Department of State Lands, Highways, and Improvements. Publisher unknown, c.1918.

Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge

Name of Property

Saline County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

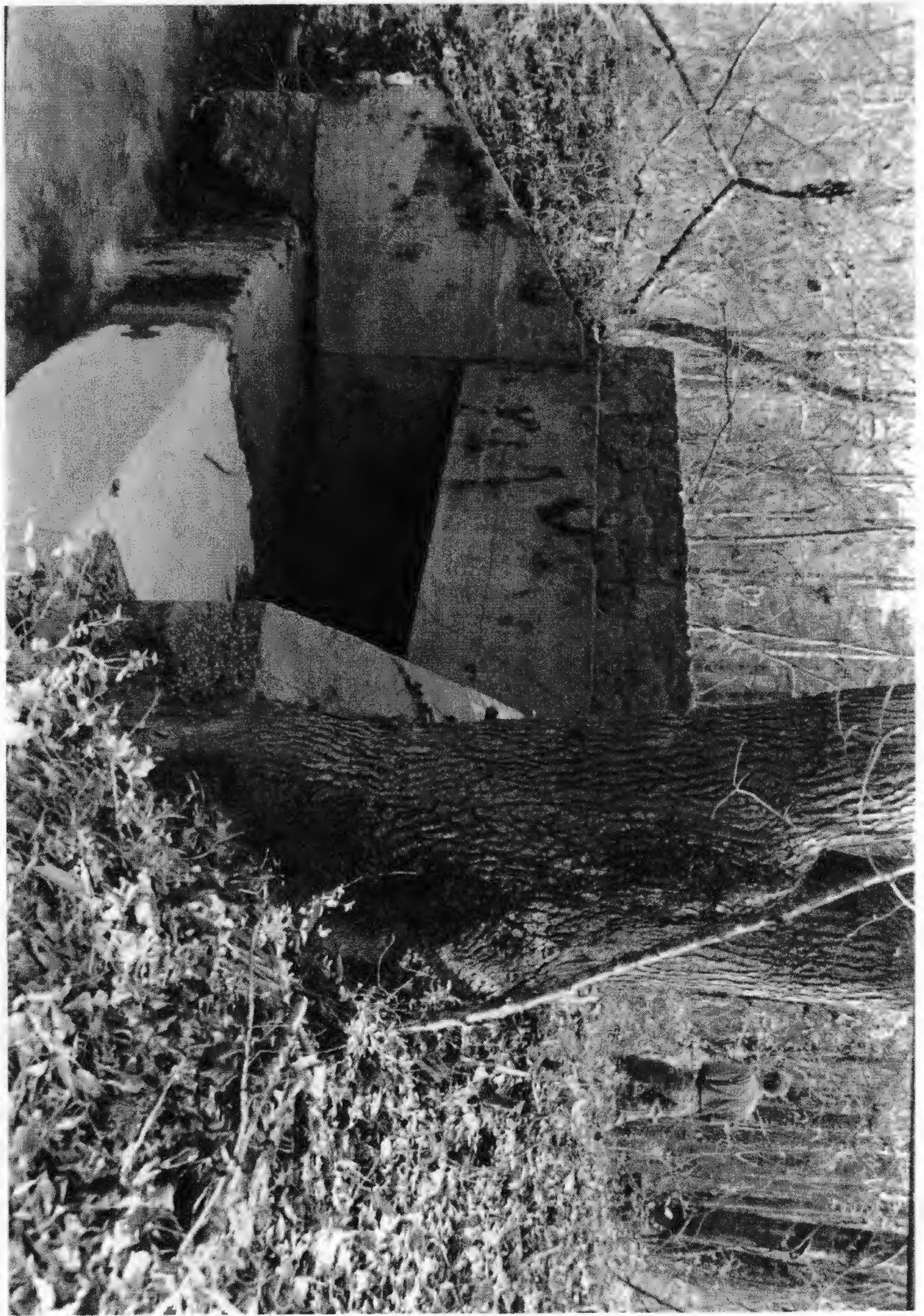
From a point 10 feet southwest of the southwest corner of the bridge, proceed easterly parallel to the southern guardrail for 25 feet, then proceed northerly perpendicular to the guardrails for 25 feet, then proceed westerly parallel to the northern guardrail for 25 feet, then proceed southerly perpendicular to the guardrails for 25 feet to the point of beginning.

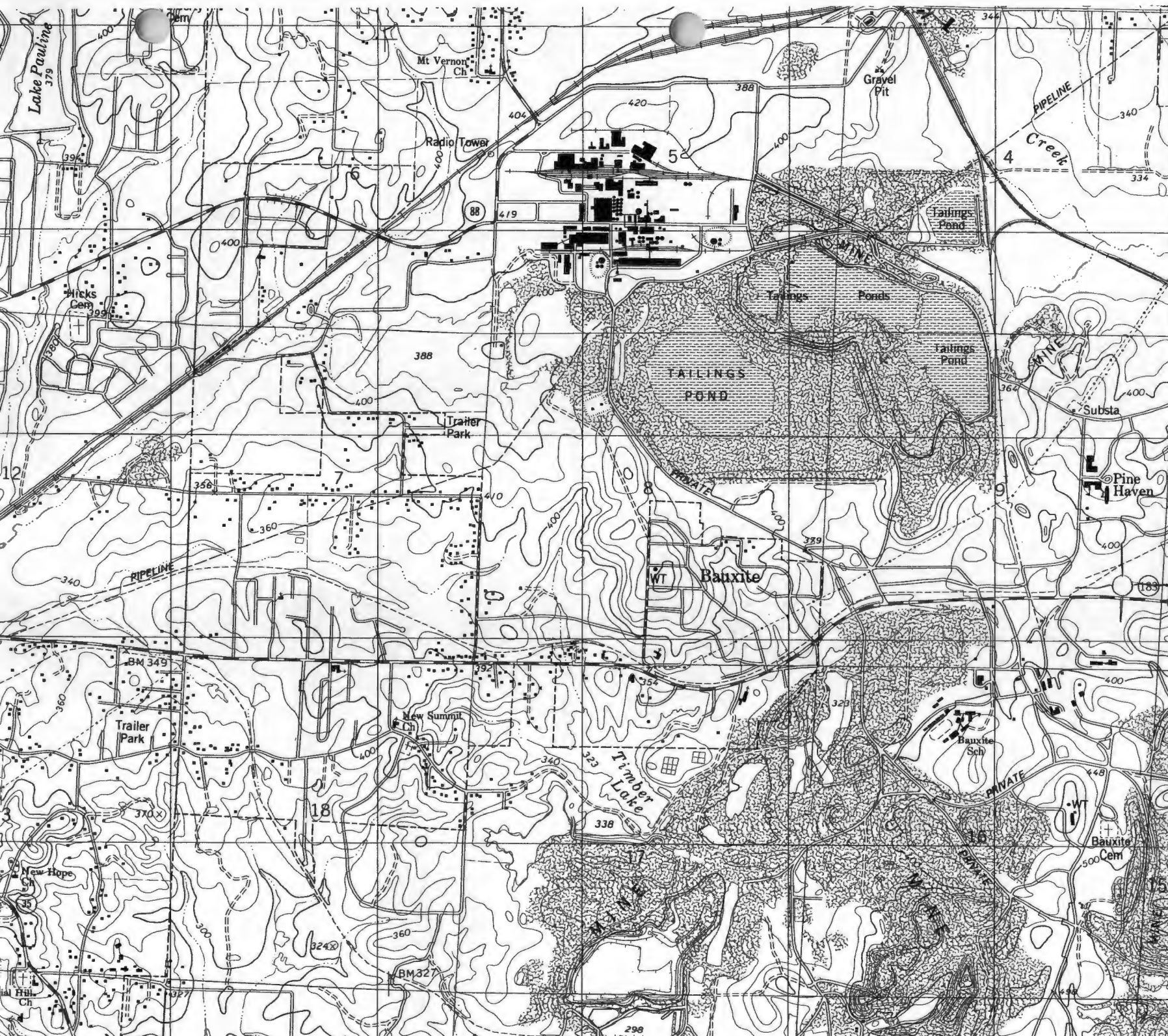
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the Old Benton-Sardis Road Bridge and its immediate setting.









T 2 S
 35'

26

25

OLD BENTON-JARDIS
 ROAD BRIDGE
 SALINE COUNTY, AR

UTM:
 15/545591/3824257

24

23

32'30"