



APPENDIX E

Cultural Resource Inventory for Phase I of the Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO) Master Plan in La Plata County, Colorado



Written by

Douglas Lynne and Doug Loebig (P.I.)
Stratified Environmental & Archaeological Services, LLC
P.O. Box 1078 (210 Goddard Avenue)
Ignacio, Colorado 81137
(970) 563-4615

Prepared for

Colleen Cummins
Senior Aviation Planner
Jviation, Inc.
900 S. Broadway, Suite 350
Denver, CO 80209
(303) 524-3030

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Abstract

From September 16 to October 16, 2014, Stratified Environmental & Archaeological Services, LLC (SEAS) conducted a cultural resource inventory as part of the Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO) Master Plan. The DRO is situated on private lands in south-central La Plata County, approximately 10.5 miles southeast of Durango, Colorado. Economic development and population growth in La Plata County and the surrounding Four Corners region has been substantial over the past 20 years and necessitates upgrading the existing airport facilities to accommodate future regional growth. As part of the Master Plan, this study was enacted to identify cultural resource constraints within the existing boundaries of the DRO to understand how future development may or may not impact cultural resources. The airport is located in portions of Sections 1 and 6, Township 33 North, Range 8 West, NMPM and Sections 20, 29, 30, 31, and 32, Township 34 North, Range 8 West, NMPM. SEAS archaeologists conducted the cultural resource inventory at the request of Colleen Cummins, Senior Aviation Planner for Jviation, Inc. on behalf of the DRO and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The purpose of the study is to document cultural resources over 50 years old and to evaluate these resources against criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The project area and the total area surveyed are 965.63 acres (390.94 hectares), although nearly half of the acreage is existing built environment.

The cultural resource inventory for the DRO Master Plan encountered and documented 14 newly recorded archaeological sites (5LP 10796 to 5LP 10809) and 28 isolated finds (5LP 10810 to 5LP 10837). Given that the airport and associated facilities were constructed in 1973 and no other standing historic structures occur within the surveyed area, historic building documentation was not a requirement of this study. None of the isolated finds are considered eligible to the NRHP given their small size, lack of cultural context, and lack of archaeological depth or further information potential. Detailed field recording of the isolates in the field has adequately characterized their limited information potential in archival form and no further cultural resource work is recommended. Sites 5LP 10796, 5LP 10797, and 5LP 10801 are recommended not eligible to the NRHP as they do not meet any criteria. In the cases of 5LP 10796 and 5LP 10797, both of these small lithic artifact scatters occur in areas of previous plowing and grading associated with the construction and maintenance of the airport and both lack archaeological integrity or further data potential. Site 5LP 10801 is a relatively recent, multi-episode trash dump dating to the 1960s to 1970s era and, as such, does not warrant further consideration.

Sites 5LP 10799, 5LP 10800, 5LP 10802, 5LP 10803, 5LP 10805, 5LP 10807, and 5LP 10809 are all considered here to be potentially eligible (need data) to the NRHP under Criterion D as a surface inspection alone was inadequate for determining the archaeological potential of these aboriginal artifact scatters. Sites 5LP 10798, 5LP 10804, 5LP 10806, and 5LP 10808 are recommended NRHP-eligible under Criterion D as the presence of thermal features in association with diverse artifact assemblages suggest these resources contain information important for understanding the prehistory and early history of the region. This study was commissioned to locate and determine the nature of the archaeological resources within the potential expansion zone of the existing Durango-La Plata County Airport. Once a preferred alternative has been identified for the proposed expansion, any of the archaeological sites recommended NRHP-eligible or potentially eligible (need data) that may be impacted by implementation of the alternative will require further consultation between FAA and SHPO representatives to mitigate any potential adverse effects.

