

MP 246 – 247: Snowy Range Road and the Hoop Creek Bridge

This section of U. S. Highway 40 contains a Colorado treasure, a great photo op, and a historical landmark all at one stop. It's the Hoop Creek Stone Bridge with its own beautiful waterfall. During the U. S. Highway 40 widening project, CDOT also improved a little noticed waterfall into another scenic treasure. Also in this section is an abandoned mine road that makes a challenging climb to the edge of the Stanley Avalanche path.



1

Author's note: because of the large number of photos used in this section, a list of who provided the photo is found at the end of this section.

Route	Mile Marker	X	Y	Longitude	Latitude
¹ U. S. Highway 40	250	432043.07	4403211.11	-105.793534	39.776127
	251	433605.28	4403062.60	-105.775278	39.774912



2

The little Hoop Creek Bridge is a favorite stop on the Clear Creek County side of the Pass for locals and returning visitors. Just about any summer weekend cars from around the country can be found stopped there. The author often asks those stopped there about their stories about the bridge. Many tell stories of their parents or grandparents stopping at the bridge when they were children. It is always a great place for a photo of a

special person, or to ask a stranger to take a photo of the whole family or a couple, or of a historic little bridge that has stood the test of time.

The red arrow shows where the Hoop Creek Bridge is located on the Clear Creek side of Berthoud Pass.



3

¹ Taken from the Colorado Department of Transportation's website:
<http://apps.coloradodot.info/dataaccess/Highways/index.cfm?fuseaction=HighwaysMain>

Its story is rich and many photos are available to tell its tale.



The United States Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads began work on Berthoud Pass in 1920.

The first bridge built in 1921 had pipe railing and had a distance of 18 feet between the railings.



This photo was taken in 1925 showing the addition of wooden guardrails.



The stone walls were added in 1926. The walls of bridge were made of moss rock. The distance between the walls was increased to 26 feet.





The photo on the left shows the culvert that was part of the curve. The red arrow shows the culvert as part of the curve. Today you can stand on the bridge and look down into the culvert.



The photo above is from Ben Dugan's book¹ and shows the curve that the bridge sits on being abandoned as the new auto road is improved.

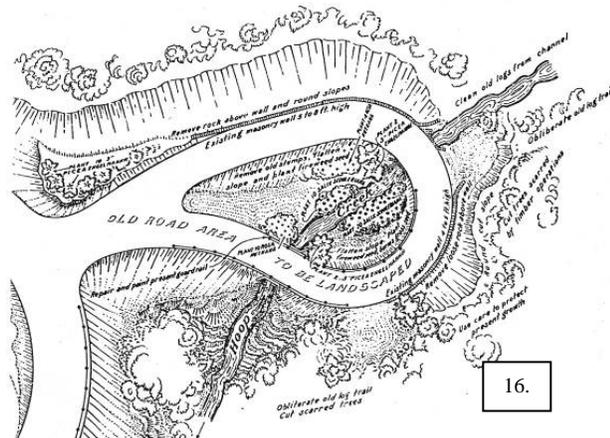
The photo on the right is taken from an old post card showing the "improved road."



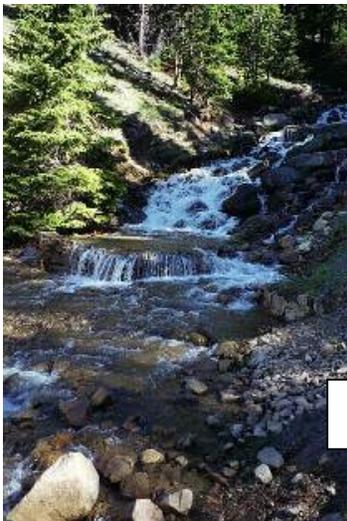
¹ Dugan, Ben M. Images of America: Berthoud Pass Arcadia Publishing Page 64

The drawing on the right is dated about 1935 when the U. S. Forest Service planned to make the site into a recreation area. Notice that the road now loops back onto itself.

The photo on the below and on the left shows the change in design.



Over the years, sediment filled the well behind the back side of the bridge. Water from the falls flowed over the back wall, split inside the bridge and continued its flow off the ends of the bridge.



18: The three color photos on this page

In the late 1990's, Partners for Access to the Woods (PAW) along with their partners became interested in Berthoud Pass and the little stone bridge. In June 2000, PAW received word that the Hoop Creek Stone Bridge was listed on the State Register of Historic Properties for the State of Colorado.

With the help from the Colorado Department of Transportation and a grant from the Coors Foundation, the dirt was removed from the back side of the bridge, and Hoop Creek flowed under the bridge once again.

But then the front side of the bridge was crumbling rapidly.



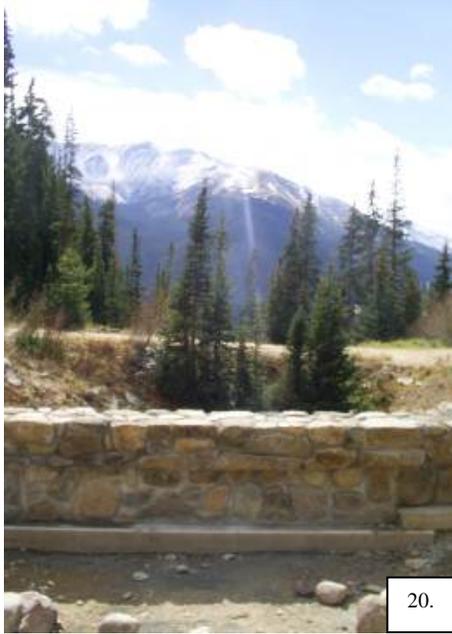
By 2006 the front wall was gone.



On August 5, 2006, a workday was planned by PAW to restore the front wall. The U. S. Forest Service gave their permission. Many individuals came together to repair the bridge. Kirk Klancke, an excellent stone mason, directed the volunteers. CDOT helped remove the dirt that had collected over the old retaining wall. Hard work and great fellowship restored the bridge that day.



19. All photos on this page.



20.

Today the little stone bridge is as beautiful as ever. It continues to be an important stop for visitors and locals alike, especially in the spring when the full run off of Hoop Creek can be seen.

Only one part of the restoration project remains and that is to cover the cement pad of the floor of the bridge to protect it from frost/freezes.

The USFS has plans to do that soon.

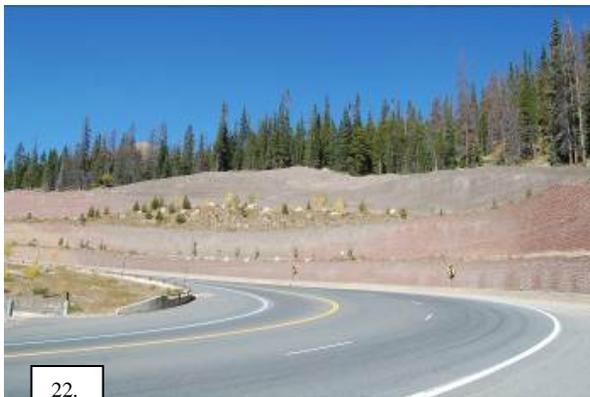


21

Read more information on [Engelmann Peak](#).
Read more information on the [Midland Trail Auto Road](#).

Just below the Hoop Creek Bridge is an improved waterfall.

During the “widening project” the waterfall formed by the “No Name” tributary of Hoop Creek was cleaned. The spring runoff of this small mountain creek is amazing.



22.



23.

At the Hoop Creek Bridge curve is the only three tier wall on the Pass.

During the construction project, the workers discovered a previous unknown section of the Hoop Creek Bridge historic retaining wall.

They saved the old wall during the new wall construction. It is interesting to check-out the difference in construction of the retaining walls needed at this curve.



24. & 25.



Another problem area for CDOT has always been the area they call the Mud Slide Curve which is just up the mountain, at the next switchback from the Hoop Creek Bridge.



New engineering methods now keep the mountain from sliding down onto the road.

In 2011, new technology was used to repair the retaining wall.

(See the section on History of U. S. Highway 40 for more information.)

The Mudslide curve is also where two historical roads meet. The first is the wagon road. It comes up the mountain from the Stanley Avalanche area and makes the turn around the current switchback, and continues up the mountain where U. S. Highway 40 crosses over it at MP 244-245. Below is a historical photo along with one from today.



The other historic road is called the Snowy Range Road. Maxwell, in his 1891 survey, refers to the road as the Snowy Range Trail. The Snowy Range was a mine that was high on the mountain and beside the Stanley Avalanche path.

To access this road from the switchback, head west at the junction with the wagon road.



The author took this photo many years ago and has not been back to the site since. She has been told it has changed little. What was the most amazing thing was the cabin (assumed from the foundation) was just at the edge of the Upper Stanley Avalanche path, which is just a few feet beyond the trees in the photo. The views are really breathtaking and worth the hike.

**Avalanche Path:
Hoop Banks A and B**

Location: Hoop Bank A: Mile 246.6 Hoop Bank B: Mile 246.4

Comments: The Hoop Bank A was located on the upper portion of the switchback at mile 246.6 and Hoop Bank B was located on the upper portion of the switch back at mile 246.4. Both banks and the avalanche hazard were eliminated when the retaining walls were built during the reconstruction of the highway in 2008.

Photo Log for Section 246 – 247: The Snowy Range Road and the Hoop Creek Bridge

1. Author
2. Author
3. Gregg Gargan: Colorado Department of Transportation Photographer (CDOT)
4. Federal Highway Administration (FHA)
5. FHA
6. FHA
7. FHA
8. FHA
9. Postcard bought on line
10. FHA
11. FHA
12. FHA
13. FHA
14. Images of America: Berthoud Pass by Ben M. Dugan Arcadia Publishing
15. Post card bought on line
16. FHA
17. Sanborn collection
18. Author
19. Author
20. Author
21. Author
22. CDOT
23. Author
24. CDOT
25. CDOT
26. CDOT
27. Denver Public Library: Western History Collection
28. Author
29. Author
30. Author

