

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center

Other names/site number: NABR Building #6, Mission 66 Visitor Center

Name of related multiple property listing:
National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources

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

2. Location

Street & number: Natural Bridges Entrance Road/Utah State Route 275

City or town: Natural Bridges National Monument State: Utah County: San Juan

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 x A B x C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT / public works, government office

RECREATION AND CULTURE / outdoor recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT / public works, government office

RECREATION AND CULTURE / outdoor recreation

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Park Service Modern or NPS Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: foundations: CONCRETE / slab, sidewalks

walls: CONCRETE / CMUs

walls: STONE / buttress bases

roof: METAL / steel wide-flanges

roof: SYNTHETICS / Vinyl cover

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center built in stages from 1966 through 1968 at Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR), San Juan County, is a Visitor Center property type as defined in the nation-wide Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) “National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources” (Carr et al. 2015). The NPS Modern-style building’s main block is a lofty 1-story steel-frame public-services pavilion in an oval “ellipse” plan, with outside walls of “half-high” concrete masonry units (CMU) in stack bond, interspersed by a metal-framed glass entrance ensemble on the southwest and floor-to-ceiling windows on the north. The pavilion is covered by a 12-section, center-peak, low-pitched roof, buttressed by free-standing CMU piers at 4 of 6 support positions on the roof’s perimeter, creating a covered wraparound porch on the south, east, and north elevations. The lower 1-story rectangular-plan, flat-roofed administration and public-restrooms wing is attached to the west side of the pavilion. This CMU-clad wing has the only major exterior alteration (1988) with a 10x10-foot CMU-clad disabled-access restroom on the southwest elevation. The only major interior alteration (2018) rebuilt the reception desk for better ranger flexibility inside the entrance lobby. The building’s historic boundary encompasses the 3,450-square-foot Visitor Center and its immediate surrounding landscape, with several character-defining features, following the original extent of ground disturbance during its Mission 66 construction within a natural piñon-juniper woodland on Cedar Mesa in San Juan County, Utah. The NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center meets all requirements for individual National Register eligibility in the Mission 66 MPDF and in the NPS theme study of *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Allaback 2000), and retains high levels of integrity through its aspects of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Narrative Description

The Narrative Description highlights the Visitor Center’s NRHP aspects of integrity and character as a Mission 66 Property Type from the nation-wide Mission 66 MPDF (Carr et al. 2015) and the NPS theme study *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Allaback 2000).

Location and Setting

Geology, Geography, and Access

Natural Bridges National Monument is a 7,636-acre preserve on the Colorado Plateau geographical province’s Monument Upwarp along its northwestern reach around Cedar Mesa, between the San Juan River to the south and the Colorado River to the west. The upwarp plus millions of years of wind and water erosion, including the climate’s freeze-thaw cycle, have created a vast and colorful landscape of ridges, cliffs, buttes, rolling mesas, and canyons framed by Elk Ridge on the northeast and Wingate Mesa on the northwest. The Bears Ears twin buttes rise about six miles east-northeast of the monument, within Manti-La Sal National Forest. Moisture slightly above 10 inches per year nourishes the piñon-juniper woodland covering Cedar Mesa, and occasionally floods the washes and canyons that flow to the west toward the Colorado River, now the upper reach of Lake Powell (Williams et al. 2014: 61,92–97).

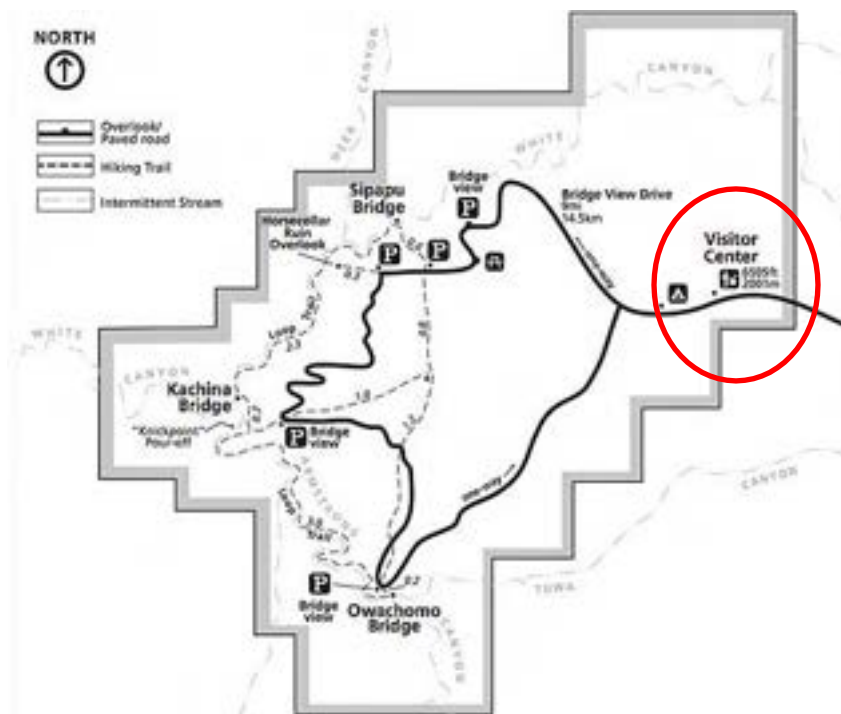


Fig. 1 National Monument boundary and features map, with the Visitor Center near the main entrance on the park-area’s east side, leading to the loop Bridge View Drive, also built during Mission 66. NPS-NABR.

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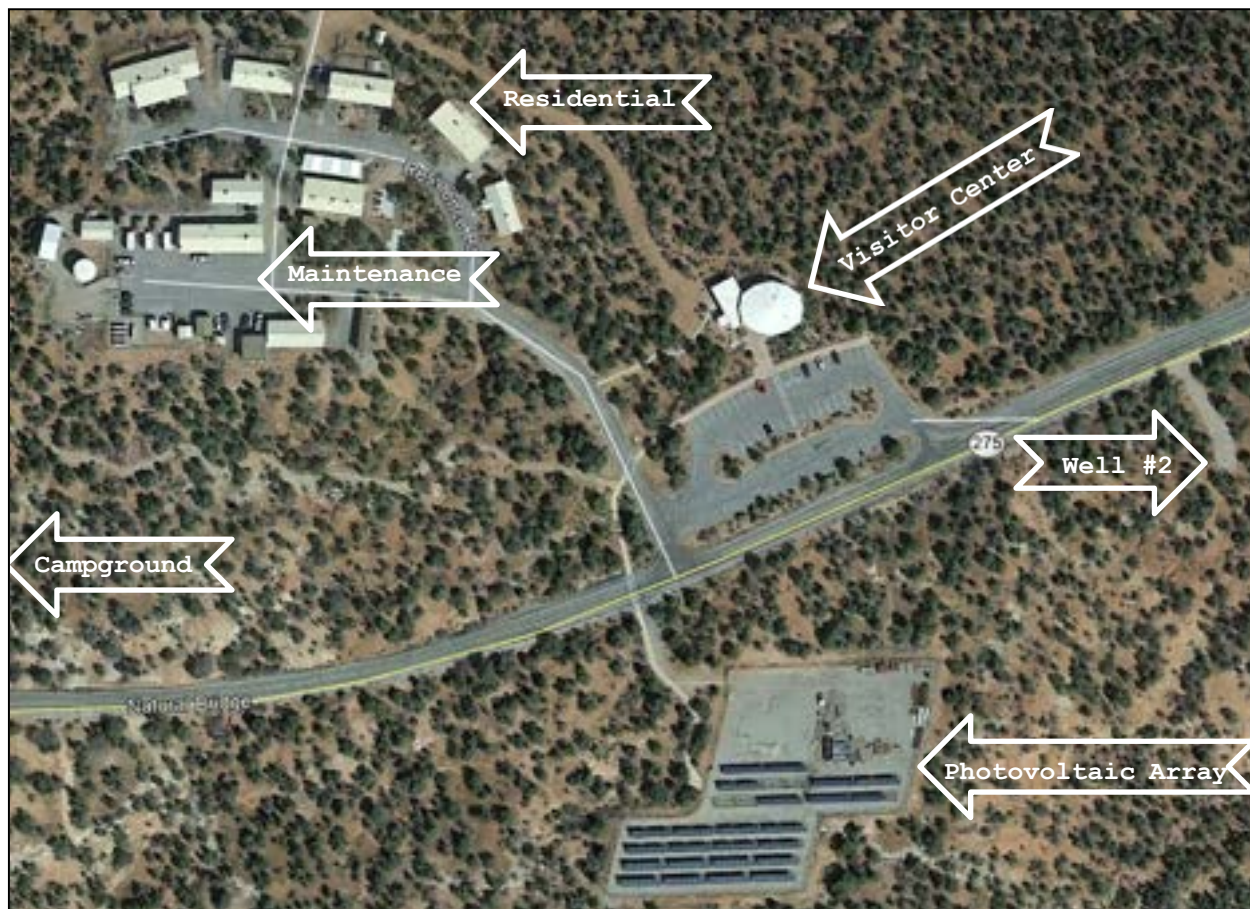


Fig. 2 The NABR Visitor Center in physical context with other Mission 66 Headquarters Area zones for residential and utility/maintenance functions. The nearby Water Well #2 and Campground completed the original Mission 66 village, but substantial alterations in the 1980s to other village buildings resulted in a development not eligible as a National Register district. The Photovoltaic (PV) Array is part of a pioneering 1980 solar power plant for the remote national monument. The Google Earth 2016.

From the monument's mesa top at about 6,500 feet elevation, water has cut Tuwa Canyon to the south and White Canyon to the north, both flowing west into Armstrong Canyon. Along their meandering way, the watercourses exposed multiple strata of Cedar Mesa Sandstone and created "necks" along their back-and-forth downward flow. Periodic flash floods through the canyons accelerated eroding and undermining of the necks, resulting in the three huge natural bridges within the monument: Sipapu Bridge at the north in White Canyon, Kachina Bridge to the west where White Canyon enters Armstrong Canyon, and Owachomo Bridge to the south where Tuwa Canyon enters Armstrong Canyon. These natural bridges differ from the elevated natural arches elsewhere in the region by their lower locations along periodic and eroding watercourses (Williams et al. 2014:317–320).

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Although the Natural Bridges National Monument proclamation came in 1908, no roads came close to the bridges until the 1930s. The State Road Commission of Utah graded State Route 95 in 1935 along the old pack trail from Blanding about 45 miles west across what is now Manti-La Sal National Forest, between the Bears Ears, and circling to the south boundary of the monument. During a post-World War II regional obsession over uranium exploration and anticipation of impoundment of Lake Powell on the Colorado River, Utah extended SR 95 in 1949 from the monument northwest about 45 miles to the river's ferry crossing at Hite and beyond. By 1964 Utah further improved SR 95 with a re-routing along its current scenic alignment from Blanding south of the national forest and west toward the monument. Utah then built its four-mile State Route 275 to connect SR 95 on Cedar Mesa with the new Mission 66 Headquarters Area and Village at Natural Bridges National Monument (UDoT 2019).

This much-improved SR 95 highway geometry and construction of SR 275 by 1964 allowed the entry of heavy equipment and loads for construction of NABR's new Mission 66 internal road system and development of the new Headquarters Area and Mission 66 Village. Completion of Glen Canyon Dam in 1963 began impoundment of Lake Powell, then Utah built a steel-arch bridge for SR 95 northeast of Hite in 1966, and first paved the highway in 1976 (UDoT 2019).

Design, Materials, and Workmanship

Exterior: The Visitor Center of 1966–1968 is a 3,450-square-foot steel, concrete-block, and wood building with a concrete foundation creating an oval “ellipse” plan, resulting in a lofty public area of approximately 62 feet east-west and 48 feet north-south. A rectangular 26x52-foot flat-roofed administrative wing is integrated on the west side. A 1988 10x10-foot disabled-access restroom slightly expanded the southwest elevation as the only exterior alteration. The public pavilion has southern and eastern exterior walls of grayish-tan, “half-high,” split-face CMU blocks in stack bond. Four free-standing “flying buttresses” of stack-bond units with stone bases flank the building's north, east, and south sides, and share the main roof's load with two corresponding piers that emerge from the wing. The main roof spanning the ellipse is a dodecagon (12-section) assembly of exposed steel wide-flange beams, dressed on their perimeter with a continuous 12-sided wood fascia. Six of these beams extend beyond the pavilion roof to the four buttresses and two piers, and evoke a lightweight tent settling over the ellipse and creating a wraparound outdoor porch. A metal-frame and glass lobby-entrance ensemble, framed with vertical cedar boards, is at a southwest niche into the ellipse, facing the parking lot. A bank of floor-to-ceiling metal-frame windows and a door-set at the north wall offer northerly views across White Canyon to The Heel and The Toe summits mingling some six miles distant among the Woodenshoe Buttes.

Interior: Most of the Visitor Center's interior partitions of wooden studs are finished with vertical knotty pine boards. These materials allow the main walls to curve into an organic floorplan that evokes an architect's ideal “golden ratio” spiral (Fig. 13, page 27). The resulting spiraling rooms—nicely fulfilling their Mission 66 visitor center assignment of guiding the visitor into the experience—include: the lobby from the main entrance to front desk then to the north windows; the Exhibits room on the south; and the Audio Visual room on the east.

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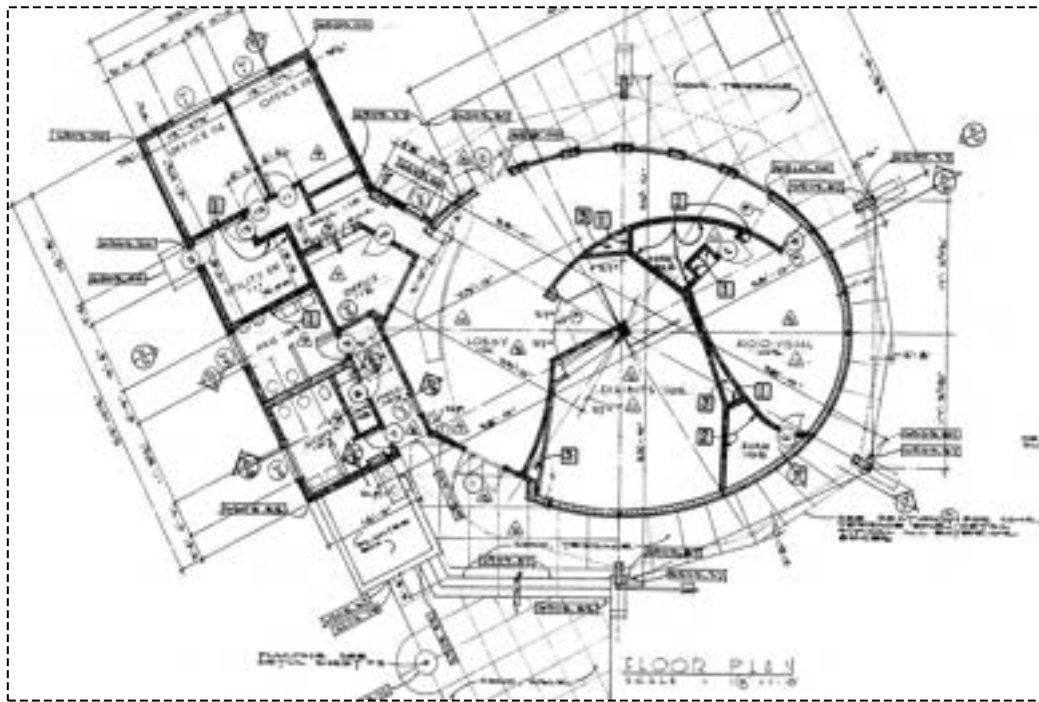


Fig. 3 NABR's Visitor Center public pavilion's spiraling floorplan evokes the "golden ratio". NPS/NABR 1965



Fig. 4 NABR's Visitor Center, facing northwest, retains its naturalistic landscape softening the original tinted concrete-paved terrace leading into the building past the original flagpole. The recent disabled-access restroom addition is at far left. The land-line telephone stand (blue baffles at left) is a reminder of the monument's very remote location. The recent vinyl roof is barely visible. Inset: Mission 66 metal-letter signage on stack-bond blocks along the wrap-around porch, facing northwest. Both: James Steely, 2018.

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Odd-shaped niches resulting from the ellipse plan and spiral partitioning create useful spaces including the staff area behind the information counter linked by a doorway into the administrative wing. Furniture storage is at both ends of the Audio-Visual Room (now the Theater, with one of the storage rooms converted into a small interpretive display). The administrative wing, behind (north of) the public restrooms, is divided into four offices, serviced by a hallway with bookshelves for research and for literature storage. These rooms are finished in standard office décor, but the generous northerly windows offer views of the same wilderness formations enjoyed by the public from the lobby.



Fig. 5 The lobby's reception desk (lighter pine boards), facing north, was rebuilt in 2018. James Steely, 2018.

Character-Defining Features

In addition to the building's character-defining design, materials, and workmanship including tinted, split-face concrete blocks on the exterior and knotty-pine paneling on the interior, many small-scale features outside and inside convey the building's integrity as a Mission 66 Visitor Center. If "Contributing" to the building's overall integrity, these features were specified on the original 1965 architectural plans (NPS/NABR) and survive (in 2021) as-built:

Location	Small-Scale Feature and Material	Date	Contributing
Landscape	Tinted and Scored Concrete Terrace on S, E, and N	1967	C
Landscape	Extension of Concrete Pavement on SW and W	1988	Non-C
Landscape	Flagpole of Metal Pipe with Ball Finial	1967	C

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Landscape	Bronze Plaque in Concrete, "Ezekiel (Zeke) Johnson"	1983	Non-C
Landscape	Natural Landscape recovered within the NRHP bndry.	1968	C
Landscape/ Building	Planter Box and integrated Drinking Fountain of multi-colored Sandstone Blocks in rough random-ashlar bond	1966	C
Landscape/ Building	Abutments of similar Sandstone at the base of each of 6 CMU Block Piers	1966	C
Building	Entrance Ensemble of Metal Storefront Double Doors and Cedar-Board Surround Extending to North	1966	C
Building	Metal Letters "VISITOR CENTER" and "INFORMATION" in Modernist Font	1968	C
Building	Signage of Router-Incised Lettering on Wood Planks	Unk.	Non-C
Building	Disabled-Access Restroom Addition	1988	Non-C
Building	Floor-to-Ceiling Windows and North Exit Door	1966	C
Interior	Vertical paneling of V-Groove Pine Boards	1966	C
Interior	Curved and Textured Valance over Information Counter	1966	C
Interior	Information Counter, Rebuilt	2018	Non-C
Interior	Exposed Wide-Flange Roof Beams	1966	C
Interior	Room Partitions of Curving Walls	1966	C
Interior	Relief Map, 3-Dimensional Topographical	1968	C

Feeling and Association

NPS Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) landscape architects segregated the 1964 Natural Bridges Residential and Maintenance/Utility zones near the planned Visitor Center to be concealed from public view by the natural vegetation of piñons, junipers, and desert brush. Early photographs (page 24) indicate that ground surfaces around the Visitor Center remained in their natural state, unlike the more groomed landscaping and signage originally planned, resulting in the feeling of only slightly disturbed wilderness that remains today.

As a result of few alterations to the natural landscape through Mission 66 development plans, the NABR Visitor Center is recognizable for its integrity of association to the Mission 66 era including the monument's reconfigured operations after improved highways invited vastly increased visitation starting in the mid-1960s. Siting of the Visitor Center took advantage of topography to allow sweeping views in all directions, particularly to the north where morning and evening light accent the lines and peaks of the Woodenshoe Buttes. These attributes thus retain the integrity of feeling in setting and association with the monument's natural Cedar Mesa and surrounding canyonlands landscape.

Integrity Summary (follows Allaback 2000:274–275):

Location: The NABR Visitor Center, built here in 1966–1968 on a specific site selected by Mission 66 architects and landscape architects, retains integrity of location.

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Setting – The Visitor Center’s mesa-top piñon-juniper woodland setting on Cedar Mesa, as the gateway to the monument’s services and features, remains recognizable and distinctive.

Design – The Visitor Center’s NPS Modern external appearance and interior finishes—including the main entrance by a planter box, and the ellipse floorplan designed to guide visitors through a predetermined procession of interpretation—and the purposely subordinate administration/restroom wing—are all very much intact and retain strong integrity of design.

Materials – NPS designers followed the Mission 66 general construction principles of advanced post-war technology, efficient materials, and labor-saving construction practices. This approach translated to a concrete-slab foundation, steel framing and CMU exterior walls, 2x4 stud frame interior walls and pine-board finishes, shop-built windows and doors, and standardized wiring and plumbing. With exception of inobtrusive replacement roofing finishes, the Visitor Center’s original materials are intact and in-service and retain a high degree of integrity.

Workmanship – The Visitor Center drawings specify many standard materials for construction, but skilled workmanship was required for and applied to their quality and durable assembly in this remote location. Workmanship retains a high degree of integrity on the exterior and interior of the building.

Association – The Mission 66 Visitor Center remains visually and strongly associated with the nation-wide Mission 66 program, along with its skilled adaptation to the management and interpretation policies at NABR, and the topography of Cedar Mesa.

Feeling – For NPS staff who have worked at NABR for more than 55 years, and for visitors who stop for orientation at the Visitor Center, the place of Cedar Mesa and its views from this main building, plus the proximity to NABR’s natural and prehistoric resources, all capture integrity of feeling, which remains since completion and continued use of this Mission 66 resource.

Conclusions – The previous evaluation of a potential Mission 66 Village Historic District at NABR (Steely 2020a)—encompassing the Visitor Center, Residential and Maintenance/Utility zones and associated infrastructure including the 1980 Photovoltaic Array, and the Campground—concluded that substantial loss of integrity in the key resources of Park Employee Housing and the Utility Building Mission 66 property types resulted in a collection of 1964–1968 resources not eligible as a historic district for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The 1966–1968 NABR Visitor Center, based on this evaluation per the Mission 66 MPDF, is “eligible by itself based on its architectural qualities, historic significance [see below], and integrity...” (Carr et al. 2015: F/94). The building’s construction spanning the end of Mission 66 in 1966 into the succeeding Parkscape USA program (1967–1972) does not diminish its association with the Mission 66 program. Further, the Visitor Center’s significance does not need to be associated with Parkscape USA, since the building was designed during Mission 66 and its construction contract was awarded in 1966 (NPS/SEUG). The Visitor Center has endured only minor alterations (page 9) over its more than half-century of service, retains strong integrity in all aspects and, coupled with historic significance demonstrated in Section 8 below, meets the criteria for listing in the National Register.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1966–1968 (dates of construction through interior outfitting)

Significant Dates

1966 (conclusion of Mission 66 work at NABR, partial completion of VC building)
1968 (installation of “museum” displays in the Exhibit Room)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Architects: Cecil J. Doty, NPS; Cannon & Mullen, architects of record
Builder: Christensen and Griffith

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center at Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR) was designed in 1964–1965, built in 1966–1967, and completed in 1968 to conclude this park-area’s five-year overhaul of staff facilities and visitor services. It is both a fine example of Mission 66 NPS Modern architecture and a singular design for the iconic building type among its many peers. This anchor building at NABR was conceived in location, form, and functions by National Park Service architect Cecil Doty, the bureau’s premier Modernist designer in the 1950s and 1960s. Its final details, construction drawings, and specifications were completed under contract by the established Modernist firm Cannon & Mullen in Salt Lake City, for the fourth of five NPS visitor centers credited to their studio between 1957 and 1967, all in Utah. The building is significant at the local level during the period of significance 1966–1968 under National Register (NRHP) Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its significant representation of the National Park Service’s renowned Mission 66 development program, when the NPS modernized and expanded NPS staff and visitor facilities throughout the nation. The building is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Education, associated with a new NPS era of education through interpretation of the national park system and each park area through intense training, additional staff, and modernized devices. Finally, the building is significant under NRHP Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its quality-designed and -built Mission 66 form, materials, and functions, assembled in a coherent and well-preserved historic resource for continuing administrative and visitor services.

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

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Encounters with the Natural Bridges

Long known to the shifting prehistoric populations of the Colorado Plateau, the natural sandstone bridges of White, Armstrong, and Tuwa Canyons in today’s southeast Utah were encountered by Anglo prospectors as early as 1883. Cass Hite, one of the region’s most persistent gold seekers, spent a decade in the 1870s and 1880s investigating Colorado River side canyons, and told associates about the curious bridge formations below the northwest reach of Cedar Mesa, along with his optimism for gold. Hite caused two gold rushes in the region after his 1883 announcement that brought more prospectors, but gold-seekers found little paydirt in this immediate area. Nevertheless, successful silver mining camps in the 1880s farther south and east along the San Juan River and its tributaries brought a regional market for beef, attracting a series of ranching settlers to occupy public grazing lands on the mesas and in the valleys of southeast Utah Territory. “A cow worth \$10 in Utah,” wrote regional historian Steven Mehls (1986:73,100–101), “was worth \$25–\$35 in Montrose, Colorado, a profit large enough to encourage even the faint hearted to try cattle raising as a way of life.”

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Determined ranching brothers who came to the Colorado River canyons of southeast Utah in the mid-1880s, John Albert “Al” and Jim Scorup, survived a 10-year drought and silver-price collapse in the 1890s. They acquired failed operations around them, forming the Scorup-Sommerville Cattle Company. Jim Scorup has received credit for telling a wider audience about the natural bridges within the brothers’ cattle range, leading a group of mining businessmen to the formations in 1903. One of the party, Horace J. Long, wrote articles in 1904 for *Century Magazine* and *National Geographic* about the sandstone structures and their host canyons. Soon, members of the Salt Lake Commercial Club visited and photographed the bridges, then launched a campaign to preserve them and bring tourists to see them. *National Geographic* published another article with the Commercial Club’s photographs in 1907 (Mehls 1986:151), just a few months after passage of the federal Antiquities Act.



Fig. 6. Photograph of Owachomo Bridge taken about 1915 by U.S. Geological Survey cartographer and later NPS administrator Arthur Demaray. Demaray was one of the first staff members of the new National Park Service in 1917 and, for one year before his retirement in 1951, served as NPS director prior to Conrad Wirth and development of Mission 66 (NPS 2018).

Origins of the National Monument

The 1906 Antiquities Act allowed President Theodore Roosevelt to proclaim national monuments from public lands that held “historic or scientific interest.” Roosevelt established 19 national monuments during his administration, the first in Wyoming (Devils Tower), but most in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. Through a process already developed by the Interior

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Department's General Land Office—GLO, the bureau that, at the time, managed the largest percentage of the federal domain, primarily in the West—"places with archeological, historical, or natural significance" were withdrawn "from settlement and other kinds of land claims," according to historian Hal Rothman (1988:54). "GLO special agents in the field brought these places to the attention of the bureau," prior to the Antiquities Act. Roosevelt continued to rely on GLO reports to determine his national monument proclamations, but for Natural Bridges the 1907 *National Geographic* article along with communications from Utah tourism boosters Byron Cummings and Edwin F. Holmes provided sufficient information to persuade the President. TR's 15th proclamation and the first in Utah, Natural Bridges National Monument on 16 April 1908, initially set aside 120 acres, limited to the three bridges and their immediate canyon landscapes (Mehls 1986:151, NPS 2006).

Subsequent Presidents expanded the monument: by 2,740 acres under William H. Taft in 1909 (Woodrow Wilson confirmed that proclamation in 1916), and 5,236 acres under John F. Kennedy in 1962. Kennedy's large addition came with a reduction of 320 acres from previous proclamations, resulting in the present 7,636 acres (NPS 2006).

Early Operations

While Utah supporters of Natural Bridges convinced President Taft to expand the monument considerably in 1909, primarily to include prehistoric archeological features in the canyons, few outsiders visited the place. Even with Wilson's creation of the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916 and transfer of Natural Bridges from the GLO to the new NPS, benign management continued, and no immediate plans emerged to publicize the monument or make it more accessible. For the NPS founding director Stephen Mather, this monument was "inconsequential to his goals," explained Rothman (1988:101), of channeling visitors to the great national parks, as well as to any national monuments that might be along the way. Arizona's small Pipe Spring National Monument, for example, enjoyed Mather's early development attention because it provided a respite for visitors driving to Utah's large Mukuntuweap National Monument (proclaimed in 1909), which Mather helped change to Zion National Park in 1919. In contrast, added Rothman (1988:151–152), "Places like Natural Bridges and Rainbow Bridge [a national monument since 1910] in southern Utah were simply too far from existing roads and rails."

Mather held similar sentiments toward many small and isolated national monuments, but with pressure to upgrade their management and fulfill his obligations for their protection, in 1923 he finally appointed the first custodian for Natural Bridges, area resident Ezekiel "Zeke" Johnson (1869–1957). Johnson set up his "headquarters" in Blanding on an improving north-south highway between Moab on the Colorado River and Bluff on the San Juan River. Johnson guided visitors on horseback from Blanding west to Natural Bridges, a several-day adventure passing through Nebo (now Manti-La Sal) National Forest (Mehls 1986:120,151). In 1924 Mather established the Southwestern National Monuments Office based in Arizona to manage a far-flung group of areas in several states. Mather selected seasoned GLO and NPS monuments custodian Frank Pinkley as superintendent of Southwestern Monuments, and as Johnson's boss (Rothman 1986:121–123).

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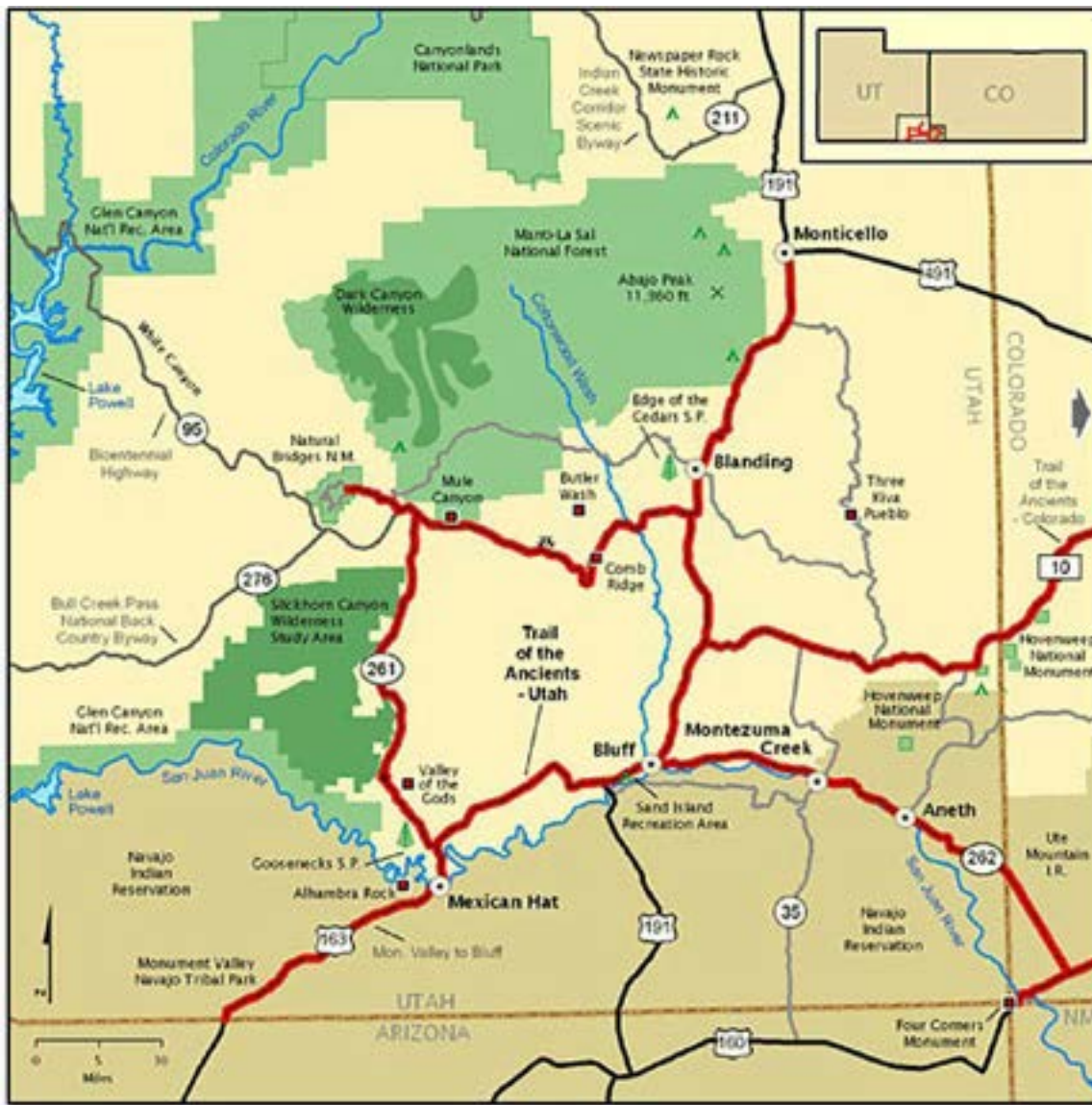


Fig. 7. Map of the Utah–Colorado Trail of the Ancients (red highways), showing Natural Bridges National Monument (center left) as one of several monument, park, forest, recreation, and wilderness preserves on the Colorado Plateau in southeast Utah. The gray line from Blanding west toward NABR is the 1935 alignment of Utah State Route 95; the west-east red line below that is the 1964 and present realignment of SR 95. Note Lake Powell to the west and Canyonlands National Park to the north. FHWA 2020.

In 1935, the Utah State Road Commission graded State Route 95 generally along custodian Johnson’s pack trail from Blanding, about 45 miles west across the national forest. The route passed between the Bears Ears twin-buttes formation, and then circled to the south boundary of the monument to enter near Armstrong Canyon and Owachomo Bridge (UDoT 2019). Johnson thereupon adjusted his visitor services toward difficult but definite access by automobile tourists,

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“building footpaths to the bridges,” detailed historian Mehls, “so ‘tenderfeet’ could enjoy the spectacular sites presented them by nature” (Mehls 1986:152). Johnson remained as the Natural Bridges custodian through April 1941, about a year following “Boss” Pinkley’s death (the NABR Visitor Center features a 1983 commemorative plaque to Johnson’s memory). In May 1941, NPS assigned Natural Bridges to a joint custodianship with Arches National Monument, one of many consolidations as the NPS experienced dismal adjustments to a defense economy while the nation prepared for World War II (Rothman 1988:183–184).

Mission 66

In 1950, the NPS annual budget was 24 per cent less than its 1940 funding, yet by the end of the decade Congress had added 21 new parks and overall park-area visitation had doubled (Wirth 1980:225–226,234). In late 1951, experienced and politically astute Conrad Wirth became the new NPS director. Trained as a landscape architect, Wirth had served as an NPS administrator since 1931 including management of the extensive and transformative NPS role with the New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Wirth supported an expanding post-war NPS system, including proposed national recreation areas around new U.S. Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs, while assuring adequate annual budgets and better working conditions for his far-flung NPS staff. He was also confident that national parks and previously marginalized national monuments deserved balanced attention and resources (Wirth 1980, Rothman 1989).

Wirth’s in-house advisors recommended a nationwide plan for meeting the visitation challenge, modernizing the parks, monuments, and other park areas overall, and conquering the annual Congressional budget cycle so unfriendly to the NPS. In 1955, with a decidedly inadequate budget that year of \$33 million, Wirth crafted a 10-year plan to be funded by as much as \$100 million per year, with a military-like “mission” of completion in 1966 and the 50th anniversary of NPS. The name “Mission 66” emerged that summer amid exhaustive preparations to sell the new program to President Dwight Eisenhower’s administration and then to Congress in early 1956 (Wirth 1980:239–241).

Wirth’s recently established NPS Western and Eastern Offices of Design and Construction (WODC and EODC)—each staffed with experienced architects, landscape architects, and engineers—drew up standardized plans for many facilities. Wirth’s designers developed a 3-part construction formula for Mission 66: advanced post-war technology, efficient materials, and labor-saving construction practices. The landscape architects in these offices played the critical roles of adapting any standardized architectural plans to the unique landscapes selected in each park area for Mission 66 development (Carr et al. 2015:E/21).

Wirth also created a new Division of Interpretation during the buildup to Mission 66, to combine previously separate NPS offices of natural history, history, museums, and information, the latter two established even earlier in NPS history under the term “education.” Interpretation, assessed Mission 66 historian Ethan Carr (2007:186), was “at the highest organizational level, parallel with [Tom] Vint’s Division of Design and Construction,” coordinating EODC and WODC. The historians gathered in the new Interpretation Division “collaborated with the planners and

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landscape architects in Vint’s division,” Carr continued. “They also designed interpretive programs and provided the content for museum exhibits and interpretive displays.”

With strong support from Eisenhower—and remarkably, sharing other ambitious federal initiatives in the 1950s of new Interstate Highways, staggering water and power projects, and the Cold War arms race—Mission 66 proved a comprehensive success. “The Mission 66 program was the largest construction program in the history of the agency,” summarized the authors of “National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources,” the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). “By 1966, Congress spent about \$1 billion on land acquisition, new staff and training, general operations, and construction activities in National Parks” (Carr et al. 2015:E/1,3).

The National Park Service constructed or reconstructed over 2,700 miles of roads and over 900 miles of trails. Many parks received adequate water, sewer, and electric service for the first time. Hundreds of park residences, comfort stations, and other public use property types and park administration were built.... Above all, the Mission 66 program funded more than 100 visitor centers, a new property type invented by the agency’s planners and architects, which were at the heart of the revised park Master Planning goals.... The [Mission 66] reinvention of the National Park Service—and to some extent the national park idea—met the urgent demands of a postwar American society (Carr et al. 2015:E/3–4).

Mission 66 Visitor Centers and Architectural Modernism

“Visitor centers” emerged from Wirth’s team as a “new” Mission 66 building type that would deliver standardized services including education/interpretation layouts, programs, and devices. But these innovations would be gathered within a building envelope to be custom-designed for each park area’s topography and mission. In addition, in-house NPS architects could contract with private firms for regional expertise, fresh design ideas, capacity for drawings and specifications, and ability to supervise construction (Wirth 1980:239).

The pursuit of an architectural “style,” for a federal bureau that had firmly established “Rustic” as its signature style during the 1920s and 1930s, had just as firmly arrived at “Modernism” during 1950s park-housing studies and on recommendations of most Mission 66 committee members. Mission 66 is credited with bringing architectural Modernism to the formerly Rustic-favoring NPS (Carr 2007:127–174), but prior to World War II some progressive NPS designers hailed an overdue evolution of Rustic into Modernism through the common theme of blending with the landscape. Former NPS landscape architect George Nason, tutored in the 1930s by NPS-Rustic master Herbert Maier and deeply involved in CCC state-park development during the New Deal, articulated his own epiphany in a 1940 Park and Recreation Progress article:

Park buildings should be as permanent as the progress of the arts and funds available can make them. Well conceived, well built, modern buildings are milestones in the progress of architecture (Nason 1940:57).

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Architectural Modernism eludes simple descriptions, but its emphasis on “function” and a resulting “form,” rather than themes from European history or rustic reflections of nature, resulted in buildings with geometric simplicity of squares, rectangles, triangles, and circles outside and inside. Carr (2007:138) paraphrased other historians by summarizing that Modernism “emphasized the composition of space rather than building mass, asymmetry in plan and elevation, and the organized repetition of individual building units.” Carr (2007:139) concluded that for the NPS:

Even before Mission 66 began, Park Service architects had already abandoned the imaginative allusions of rustic architecture in favor of a more technical and rationalized approach to building that, in the context of the national parks, could symbolize the more scientific and efficient park management that Mission 66 planning hoped to accomplish.

Utah and Mission 66

The Mission 66 program kicked off in the spring of 1956, even before its official beginning that July with Eisenhower and Congress’ approval of their Fiscal Year 1957 federal budget. Among the first Mission 66 developments, Dinosaur National Monument in northeast Utah received its celebrated, ultra-Modernist-style, Quarry Visitor Center (completed in 1958, now a National Historic Landmark), plus new adjacent zones for staff housing and maintenance (Steely 2020b). Previously little-known and little-visited Dinosaur National Monument had in the early 1950s attained national prominence in the struggle to prevent Bureau of Reclamation engineers from damming the Green River near Echo Park in Colorado and at Split Mountain in Utah.

Dinosaur’s early and considerable Mission 66 development overtly acknowledged the conservation-movement victory in late 1955 that stopped these dams (Harvey 1994). However, Reclamation then moved ahead with its contingency plan to build dams at Flaming Gorge on the Green River near the Utah-Wyoming line, and at Glen Canyon on the Colorado River near the Utah-Arizona line (Harvey 1994:221–226, Allaback 2000:39:66). The latter dam created Lake Powell that, starting with the dam’s completion in 1963, could impound water more than 90 straight-distance miles northeast up the Colorado River into Utah, at Hite Crossing as close as 25 miles west-northwest of Natural Bridges National Monument.

Utah’s first two large National Parks, Zion and Bryce Canyon, soon caught up with Dinosaur National Monument and received extensive Mission 66 developments including visitor centers: Zion’s at Oak Creek in 1957–1961 and Bryce Canyon’s in 1958–1959. Both buildings were designed by architects Cannon & Mullen of Salt Lake City, in collaboration with WODC and its senior NPS architect Cecil Doty, observing what had become the typical Mission 66 design process (Allaback 2000:245). Meanwhile the NPS developed plans for its extensive Glen Canyon National Recreation Area along Lake Powell’s shorelines, most in Utah, although the 1.3-million-acre park area did not open to the public until 1972 (Williams et al. 2014:305–312).

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Following are the areas of significance that further incorporate pertinent context from the nation-wide Mission 66 MPDF (Carr et al. 2015) and NPS theme study *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Allaback 2000), with details from NPS and NABR archives, and other sources as cited.

Criterion A Significance: Community Planning and Development

Natural Bridges and Mission 66

After World War II and during a regional fixation with uranium exploration encouraged by the federal government, the Utah State Road Commission in 1949 extended State Route 95, first constructed west from Blanding in 1935, from Natural Bridges northwest another 45 miles to the Colorado River ferry crossing at Hite (UDoT 2019). By 1956 Natural Bridges National Monument received the standard 4-letter Mission 66 abbreviation of “NABR,” but the monument’s first Mission 66 prospectus, a document produced by all NPS park areas, did not appear until 1963 (Canter and Wilson).

NABR’s delay of preparation for Mission 66 resulted from several factors. First, its joint management since 1941 by the custodians, then superintendents after 1944, of Arches National Monument likely made ARCH the partnership’s priority in Mission 66 planning. Arches was already easily accessible to the public and offered a foundation of existing improvements by the CCC in 1940–1941. Then in 1962, President Kennedy proclaimed an addition of 5,236 acres (and small reduction of 320 acres) to NABR, creating a better platform for development. Finally, road and recreation planning for Lake Powell and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, accelerating with its dam’s completion in 1963, immediately benefitted Natural Bridges through the coordinated rebuilding of State Route 95 for much-improved highway access to the lake’s upper reaches along the Colorado River near Hite, and an expensive steel-arch bridge crossing opened there in 1966 (see Fig. 7, page 17).

By far the longest serving Arches-Natural Bridges superintendent, from 1949 through 1972, was Bates Eno Wilson (1912–1983), additionally credited with the idea of creating Canyonlands National Park situated between the two national monuments. Wilson managed Natural Bridges throughout the Mission 66 program from his office at Arches, where NPS built a Mission 66 visitor/administration center to WODC and Doty’s design in 1959–1960 (supplanted in 2005 and remodeled into staff offices), then he added Canyonlands’ administration to his portfolio with its creation in 1964. Wilson still served as superintendent of all three areas when Arches became a national park in 1971 (NPS 2019, Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks 2017).

The 1963 Natural Bridges Mission 66 prospectus, serving as its first Master Plan, stimulated extensive landscape and village-community planning that year. NABR’s own mission, described the prospectus written by Wilson and NABR Park Naturalist Stanley G. Canter, “is to bring the visitor into an intimate contact with the scenic grandeur, geologic phenomena, and the natural and human history of the monument, and to develop...intellectual and esthetic experiences which are afforded in the highest order...” (Canter and Wilson 1963:1).

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Citing the monument's 1962 visitor total of 10,146, well above that year's previous projection of 6,800, the prospectus asserted that "Natural Bridges is just now at its threshold of development" (Canter and Wilson 1963:4-5):

Within two years plans call for the construction of a new road system, visitor center, employee housing, campgrounds, and a trail system. The main road will lead to the visitor center, with spur roads runing [sic] to overlooks for the three bridges....

State Road 95 from Blanding will be the main access route to the east side of Lake Powell, and plans are for it to be paved in the near future. A tremendous increase in visitation is anticipated, considering the development of Lake Powell....

The prospectus concluded with guidelines numbered by priority, beginning with "1. ...new road system, visitor center, trail system and exhibits," followed by "2. Fencing boundary," required no doubt after Kennedy's recent enlargement of the monument. Next came "3. Furnish housing for those employees subject to rotation, for seasonal employees, and for as many others as required to provide reasonable flexibility in selection and use of staff." Housing needs for this remote assignment repeated in "5. Staff the Monument with sufficient personnel to protect, interpret, and maintain the area properly" (Canter and Wilson 1963).

By 1964 Utah greatly improved SR 95 with a re-routing along its current alignment from Blanding south of Manti-La Sal National Forest (renamed in 1950) and west to the monument. With U.S. Bureau of Public Roads assistance, Utah that year constructed the 4-mile State Route 275 to connect SR 95 on Cedar Mesa with the new Mission 66 Headquarters Area at Natural Bridges National Monument. The much-improved SR 95 highway and connection of SR 275 allowed passage of construction equipment and materials for NABR's new Mission 66 internal road system and development of the new Headquarters Area. Utah finally paved SR 95 in 1976 during the national observance of the 200th anniversary of U.S. independence, inspiring the naming of SR 95 as the state's Bicentennial Highway (UDoT 2019) (see Fig 1, page 5).

Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC)

"Site planning," explained the "Mission 66 Era Resources" MPDF authors, "was an important characteristic of the Mission 66 program and was accomplished by National Park Service landscape architects" (Carr et al. 2015:E/20). These WODC designers conducted field surveys to choose the Cedar Mesa headquarters site, drew up its village layout, adjusted specific placement of resources, and monitored construction to preserve vegetation and make further construction adjustments in the field when necessary (see Fig 2, page 6).

The WODC landscape architects—specific designers on the drawings are 'V. Anderson' and 'Ballard'—made a number of adjustments to the site planning as designs progressed from 1963 into 1964. An early landscape plan projected the Headquarters Area farther inside the monument and on a single internal main road with connecting spurs to the natural bridges, rather than a broad cross-monument loop. By early 1964 the current Bridge View Drive loop road was

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designed, and the Visitor Center position moved to its current location, with the Residential and Maintenance zones proposed farther west on their own spur north off the Entrance Road. By 1964 and completion of the SR 275 Entrance Road, the current headquarters spur shared by the Visitor Center and the Residential-Maintenance/Utility zones was finished as construction began on the Residences and on the 9-mile loop Bridge View Drive (NPS/TIC).

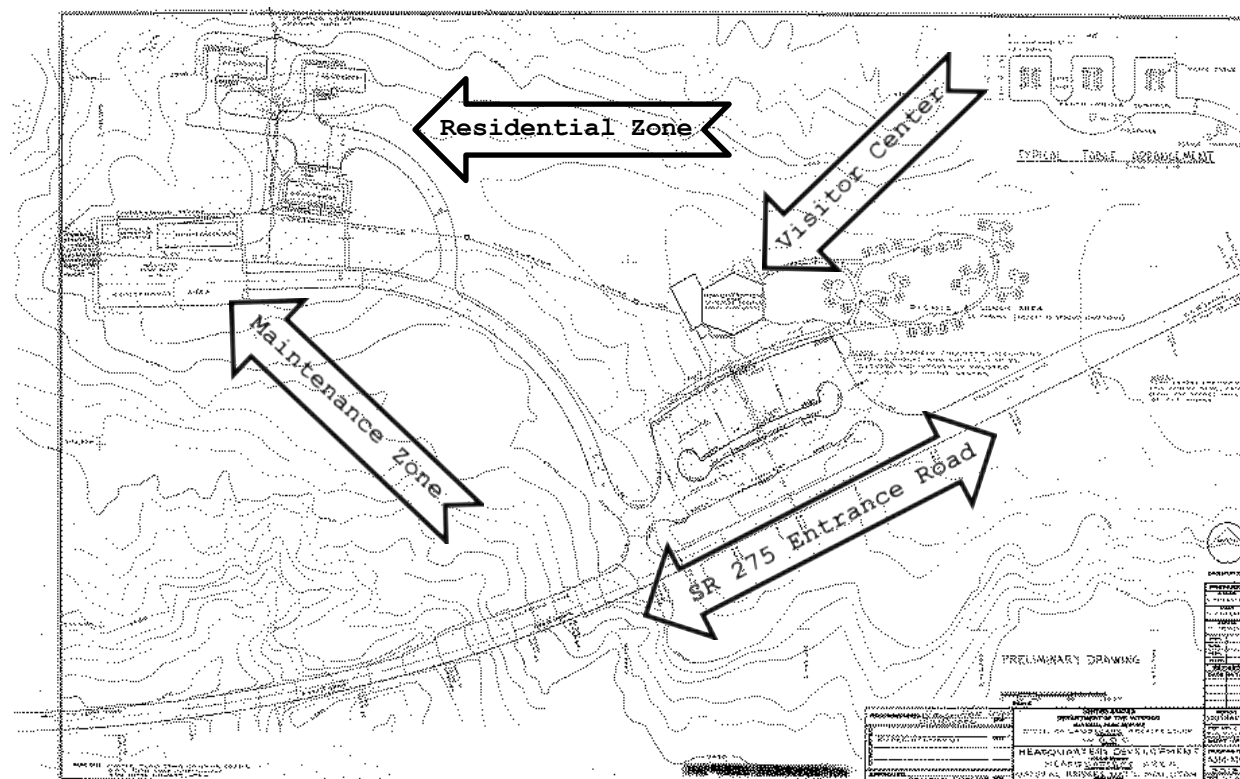


Fig. 8. NABR landscape plan of May 1964, signed by 'V. Anderson' at WODC, generally as constructed by 1968, except for the cancelled picnic area east of the Visitor Center, and the Generator Building finally placed south of the Utility Building in the maintenance zone on the west. Note that the Visitor Center's roof is depicted on this drawing as hexagonal (6-sided) but its final design doubled its steel roof ribs to a dodecagonal 12-section structure (see Fig. 12, page 26). NPS/TIC.

Preliminary plans and construction drawings for all the buildings in the NABR Mission 66 Village are titled "Headquarters Area, Natural Bridges National Monument" to confirm that any standard designs were adapted specifically for their places at the monument. WODC designers who signed the drawings included architects 'Spangenberg,' 'Per Rundberg,' and 'RCG' on the Mission 66-standard 3-Bedroom plans; engineer (Ed) 'Dottery' on the standard-plan triplex Apartments; and J.P. 'Pack' Hunter on the Utility Building also based on standard plans (NPS/TIC, NPS/NABR). WODC engineer C.R. Staton probably designed the small Generator Building to supply electric power to the remote location. Contractors completed the three houses in 1964 and the Utility and Generator Buildings in 1965 (Steely 2020a).

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Criterion C Significance: Architecture

By 1967 the Headquarters Area and Village at NABR matured to its full range of services with completion of its anchor Visitor Center, although its exhibits were not installed until early 1968 (NPS/SEUG). The lofty 1-story, oval-plan, dodecagon (12-section)-roofed public pavilion, with attached rectangular office wing (see plans, Figs. 10, 11, and 12 below), was designed in concept by NPS “principal architectural designer” at WODC, Cecil John Doty (1907–1990), and completed with construction drawings by the architecture firm of Cannon & Mullen from Salt Lake City (NPS/TIC 1964, Allaback 2000:260,264).



Fig. 9. NABR's Visitor Center completed on the exterior by the September of 1967 photograph, facing northeast. The visitors at the entrance door had just arrived in a 1967 Chevrolet. NPS/SEUG 1967.

Doty began his NPS career in 1934 drafting sophisticated NPS Rustic-style buildings under the master of the style, architect Herbert Maier, all built with CCC labor in local and state parks throughout the Intermountain West and Southwest. Doty moved with Maier by 1940 to the NPS Region IV office in San Francisco. After World War II Doty helped organize WODC in San Francisco with the title of regional designer, under WODC's supervising architect Lyle Bennett. Doty quickly became the leading light of NPS Modern style, and eventual first-line designer of some 54 Mission 66 visitor centers. Typically (as with Natural Bridges' Visitor Center), Doty identified the location of the visitor center—which in turn guided the location of the associated Mission 66 Village—and sketched its basic form, orientation, and interior plan based on the park area's geography, administrative program, and interpretive/educational mission. In many cases, WODC then contracted with experienced regional private firms to finish the drawings and oversee construction of the building (Carr 2007:139,147, Allaback 2000:238–240).

The private architecture firm of Cannon & Mullen in Salt Lake City contracted for the Visitor Center drawings and oversight at Natural Bridges following Doty's location and design-concept

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phases. Architect Howell Quayle Cannon founded the firm in 1938, expanding with his son Lewis Telle Cannon in 1944 and partner James McDonald Mullen in 1949. The principals excelled in small to large public buildings and designed dozens across Utah through 1969 (Utah Division of State History 2019). During Mission 66 the firm also designed the visitor centers at Utah's Timpanogos Cave National Monument (1963, destroyed by fire 1991), Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks (1959 and 1960, both extant but supplanted by newer buildings), and post-Mission 66 at Golden Spike National Historic Site (1967) (Allaback 240,245,260,264).

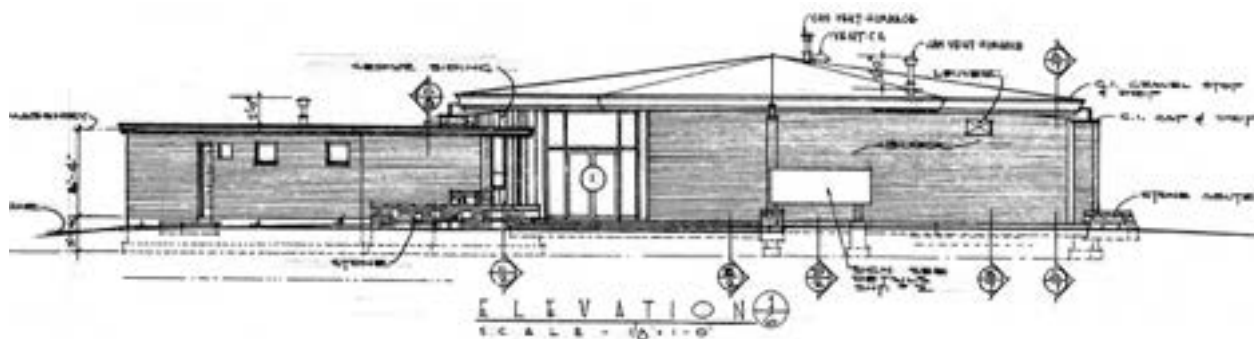


Fig. 10. NABR Visitor Center south elevation facing the main parking lot and drawing visitors into the entry doors at center left. Restrooms are on the left, with administrative offices behind. The large “Sign” drawn in front has been replaced with native plantings. NPS/TIC 1965.

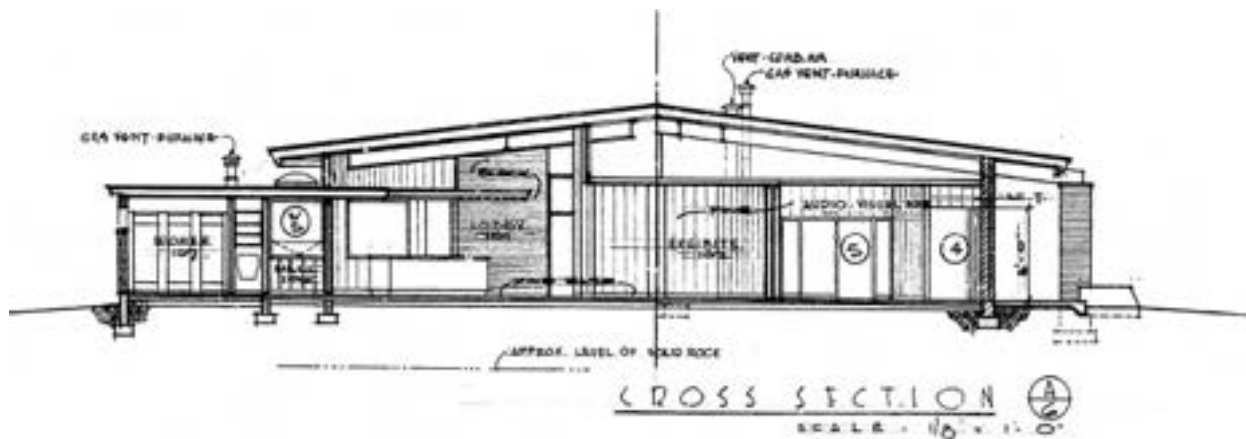


Fig. 11. NABR Visitor Center section showing the entrance lobby with exposed steel beams, leading to the Exhibits room and Audio-Visual room (now Theater), all fulfilling the building's Education role. Cecil Doty and his contract architects Cannon & Mullen did not design their four other NPS visitor centers with cylindrical main floorplans, but their 1960 visitor center at Zion National Park used similar extended steel beams—at similar dimensions and angles to Natural Bridges drawings in 1965—to support that building's octagonal entrance lobby (Allaback 2000:234–246). NPS/TIC 1965.

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Most of Cecil Doty's Mission 66 visitor-center concepts assembled rectilinear (squared-off) spaces for the building's various purposes, but he always plotted a hierarchy of spaces based on the visitor's procession from restrooms to information counter to interpretive exhibits to film overview, and back. Recognizing that a pedestrian does not progress in right angles but strolls most comfortably in flowing lines, Doty and his contract designers sometimes conceived circular/cylindrical floorplans that more naturally matched a visitor's own movements. Examples of NPS visitor centers with prominent round pavilions appeared at Gettysburg National Military Park (1962, demolished 2013) with its Cyclorama rotunda for displaying the 1883 painting of the battle, and at Mesa Verde National Park (1968, extant but supplanted) with its round mass evoking the park's Ancestral Pueblo kivas (Allaback 2000:259–260,264).

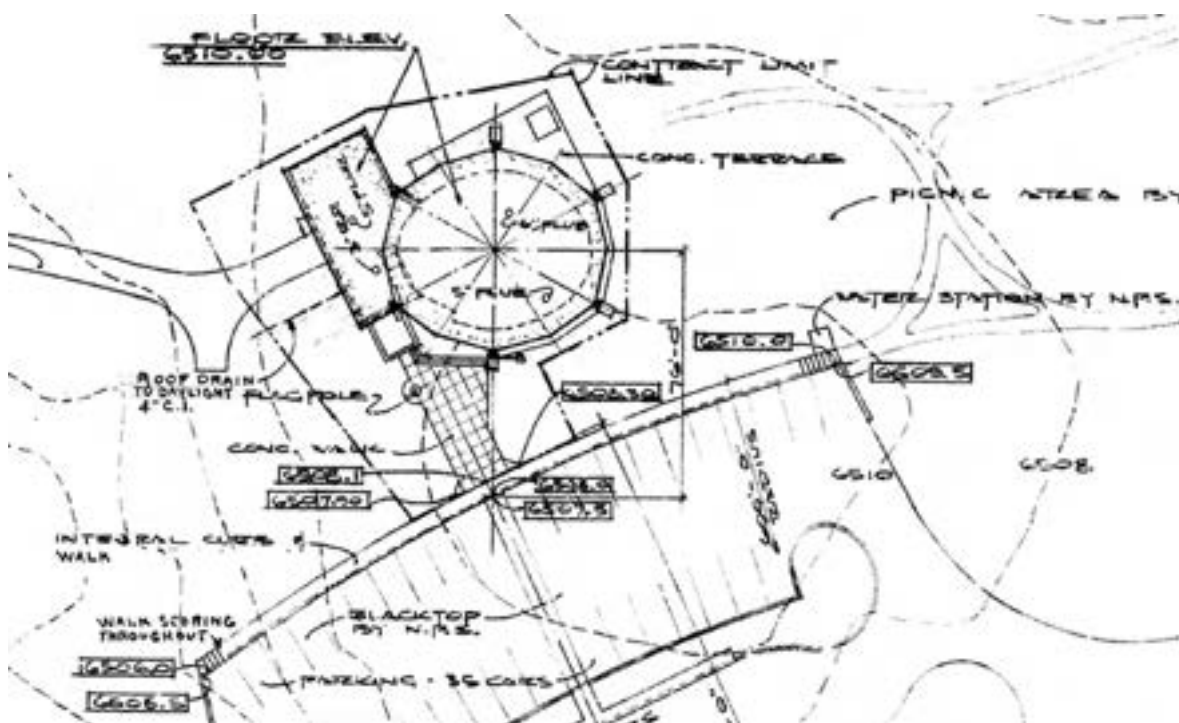


Fig. 12. NABR Visitor Center site plan with parking and un-built picnic area to the east. The 12-section roof is evident in this drawing, and placement of its 6 extended piers (4 are free-standing "Block Pier" buttresses). The dashed "Contract Limit Line" serves as the NRHP boundary (page 36). NPS/TIC 1965.

At Natural Bridges, Doty and Cannon & Mullen perhaps appreciated the curving profiles of the three Natural Bridges themselves, which visitors could not see from the visitor center but would encounter while exploring the monument. Additionally, their final floorplan resembles a cutaway nautilus shell (page 8 and below), evoking the "golden ratio" figure of a receding geometric spiral. All beginning architecture students study the golden spiral because the ancient Greeks and Romans applied its logarithmic ratio to the dimensions of their imposing Classical temples and site plans. With such insider symbolism, the designers here might have shared an idealistic impulse to incorporate an overt reference to the golden ratio/spiral somewhere, sometime in their careers. Ultimately, the Visitor Center's oval/ellipse plan, enveloping a

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spiraling series of rooms, took Doty's visitor-procession diagrams to heart and dismissed any wasted corners of rectilinear spaces found in most other Mission 66 visitor centers.

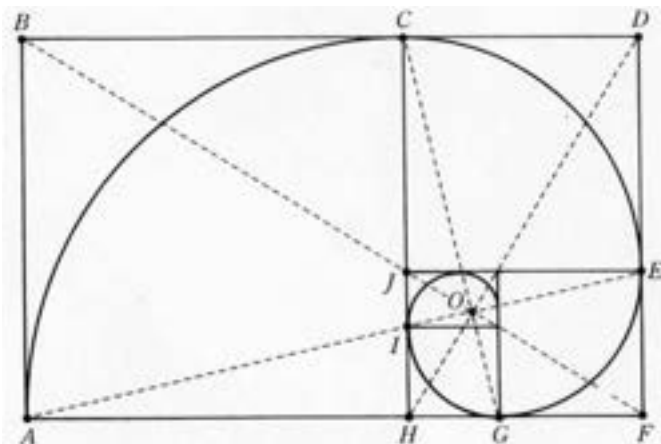


Fig. 13. The ancient “golden ratio” illustrated by the “nautilus shell” form has appeared for centuries in architectural textbooks, and in highly influential works on Modernism by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) in 1948 and 1955, translated into English in 1954 and 1958. The designers of NABR’s Visitor Center in 1964–1965 revealed awareness of this device and its Modernist relevance in their spiraling floorplan. Le Corbusier 2000.

The construction company Christensen & Griffith of Tooele, Utah, won the NPS contract in late 1965 to build the 3,450-square-foot NABR Visitor Center with work continuing through early 1967 (NPS/SEUG 1965–1968). Design and construction cost \$107,023, then NABR embellished the building and grounds with \$17,123 for day labor through the summer of 1968. NPS installed the Visitor Center exhibits also in 1968, completed by March that year (NPS/SEUG). A disabled-access restroom was added to the west elevation in 1988 (Hays 2012), and the public lobby’s visitor-contact counter was rebuilt in 2018 (see Fig. 4, page 8).

Criterion A Significance: Education

Visitors at Natural Bridges continue to pass from the Visitor Center entrance in short curving strolls to the visitor-contact counter then into the Exhibits room or to the Theater for the monument’s introductory film, as they have since all exhibits opened in 1968 (page 8). As noted above, these educational experiences are also a Mission 66 innovation, stemming from the program’s origins with Director Wirth’s creation in 1954 of the new Division of Interpretation that combined previously separate NPS offices of natural history, history, museums, and information. “Mission 66 was planned not only to avoid the physical damage caused by growing crowds,” according to historian Ethan Carr (2007:187), “but also to make sure that as many people as possible had a chance to experience and fully appreciate the special significance of every park [area] in the system.” The standardized Mission 66 approach to interpretative devices in visitor centers remains evident in the NABR building’s layout and staff assistance: information counter for verbal and printed information on the monument; Exhibits room for maps, images, objects, and—always—a 3-dimensional topographical-relief map; and Audio-Visual room (today’s Theater) for the professionally produced introductory slide-show or film (today a digital production) (see Allaback 2000:30). The lobby’s north bank of floor-to-ceiling windows, today somewhat crowded by the obligatory bookstore, is also part of the Mission 66 educational tactic to frame—literally—views from inside the visitor center toward the park-area’s unique scenery, enticing the visitor to get back outside and continue the encounter.

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SUMMARY

All historic-age resources comprising the NABR Mission 66 Village were evaluated following the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Evaluation (NPS 2020) as well as Registration Requirements in the fully developed Historic Context “Mission 66 program, 1956–1966” (Carr et al. 2015:F/59,F/62,F/94–98) and in the NPS theme study *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Allaback 2000:273–275). The NRHP *criteria* and *areas* of significance apply here at the local *level* of significance during the Mission 66 *period* of significance 1956–1966, specifically 1966–1968 for the Visitor Center construction and completion dates. NRHP Criterion A was applied in the areas of Community Planning and Development, and Education. Criterion C was applied in the area of Architecture. The 1966–1968 Visitor Center is a Mission 66 Property Type sited by NPS landscape architects, designed by an NPS architect and contract architects for the specific topography and interpretation program at NABR, and built by a regional contractor. While its slightly delayed construction and outfitting spanned the national completion of Mission 66 and into its successor program “Parkscape USA” (1967–1972), the building was designed in 1964–1965 and funded in 1966, squarely within the Mission 66 period. Its remarkable state of preservation, retaining strong integrity in all aspects, affirms the validity of its planning for this unique park area, as well as the quality of its original design and construction.

This evaluation of integrity and significance concludes that the most visible and best preserved Mission 66 facility at NABR, the 1966–1968 Visitor Center, is eligible for NRHP listing under the context, criteria, areas, level, and period applied to all resources in the 1964–1968 NABR Mission 66 Village (Steely 2020a). This excellent and intact example of Mission 66 visitor centers should be the focus of preservation and interpretation of the formative Mission 66 Era at Natural Bridges National Monument.



Fig 14. NABR’s 1966–1968 Visitor Center about 1980, facing north, from a monument guidebook published by the Canyonlands Natural History Association. NPS c. 1980 via Project Gutenberg.

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(NPS/NABR) National Park Service / Natural Bridges National Monument. Natural Bridges National Monument flat files in Maintenance Area. Drawings at NABR include Mission 66 buildings, structures, landscapes, alterations, etc.

(NPS/SEUG) National Park Service / Southeast Utah Group. Natural Bridges National Monument administrative archives. Digital records at the SEUG park administration offices in Moab include Mission 66 Master Plans, 1960s Superintendent's Monthly Reports, 1970s Canyons Complex Staff Meeting minutes, Fixed Property Records, etc.

(NPS/TIC) National Park Service / Technical Information Center. Natural Bridges National Monument building drawings, landscape plans, etc. Digital records at TIC in Lakewood, Colorado, include Mission 66 buildings architectural drawings.

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Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
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Williams, Felicie, Lucy Chronic, and Halka Chronic. *Roadside Geology of Utah*. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2014.

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Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

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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
- previously determined eligible by SHPO Consensus (Hays 2012)
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office (Utah Division of State History)
- Other State agency
- Federal agency (National Park Service NABR, SEUG, TIC)
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.609356

Longitude: -109.977044

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center building's boundary covers the original contractor's woodland-clearing limits, providing a historically based, narrow polygonal buffer surrounding the building. See site plan Fig. 12, page 26, dashed "Contract Limit Line" for the exact boundary, reproduced on page 36.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Adhering to the Mission 66 philosophy of "the least amount of ground disturbance and native vegetation removal" (Carr et al. 2015:E/12), the boundary acknowledges the development limits of the Mission 66 program for the 1966–1968 Visitor Center at Natural Bridges National Monument. The presence of this development some 55 years later (in 2021) and the endurance of its surrounding natural landscape beyond this boundary establish its significance within the above described boundary, illustrated on page 26.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: James W. Steely
organization: Organization of American Historians
street & number: 1003 N Emerson Street
city or town: Denver state: Colorado zip code: 80218
e-mail: jwsteely@gmail.com
telephone: 602-692-6394
date: 8 December 2021

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. Attached. Also see Figs. 1, 2, 8, and 12 on respective pages 5, 6, 23, and 26.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map. Page 36.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the **SHPO**, **TPO**, or **FPO** for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map, page 36. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph. Facsimile photographs included here, pages 37–42).

Photo Log

Name of Property: Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
City or Vicinity: Natural Bridges National Monument
County: San Juan State: Utah
Photographer: James W. Steely
Dates Photographed: 29 November 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center, facing northeast from parking lot.
- 2 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center, south elevation, facing east.
- 3 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center sign-lettering on wall, facing northwest.
- 4 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center "Block Pier" with stone base, facing east.
- 5 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center north elevation, facing south-southeast.

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

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- 6 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center north and west offices elevation, facing southeast.
- 7 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center west elevation with 1988 restrooms addition, facing east.
- 8 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center Lobby/Visitor Contact, facing north.
- 9 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center Lobby, facing south.
- 10 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center Lobby north windows, facing west.
- 11 of 11. NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center 3-dimensional topographical-relief map

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

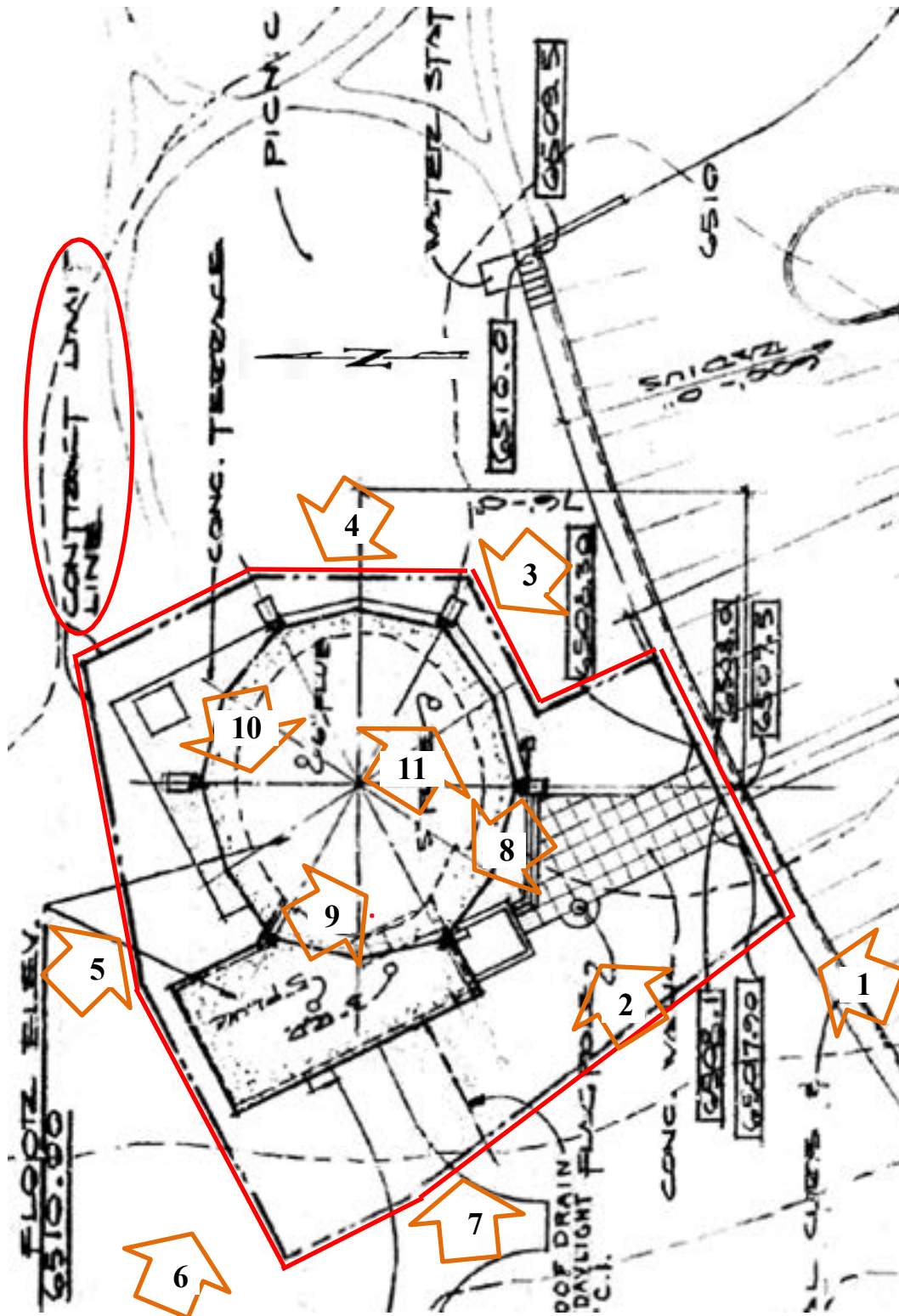
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

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Sketch Map of NABR Visitor Center, with boundary (red line) from 1965 site plan. NPS-TIC 1965.

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
County and State



1 of 11. *UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0001*



2 of 11. *UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0002*

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
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of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0003



4

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0004

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
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of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0005



6

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0006

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
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County and State



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of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0007



8

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0008

Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
County and State



9

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0009



10

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0010

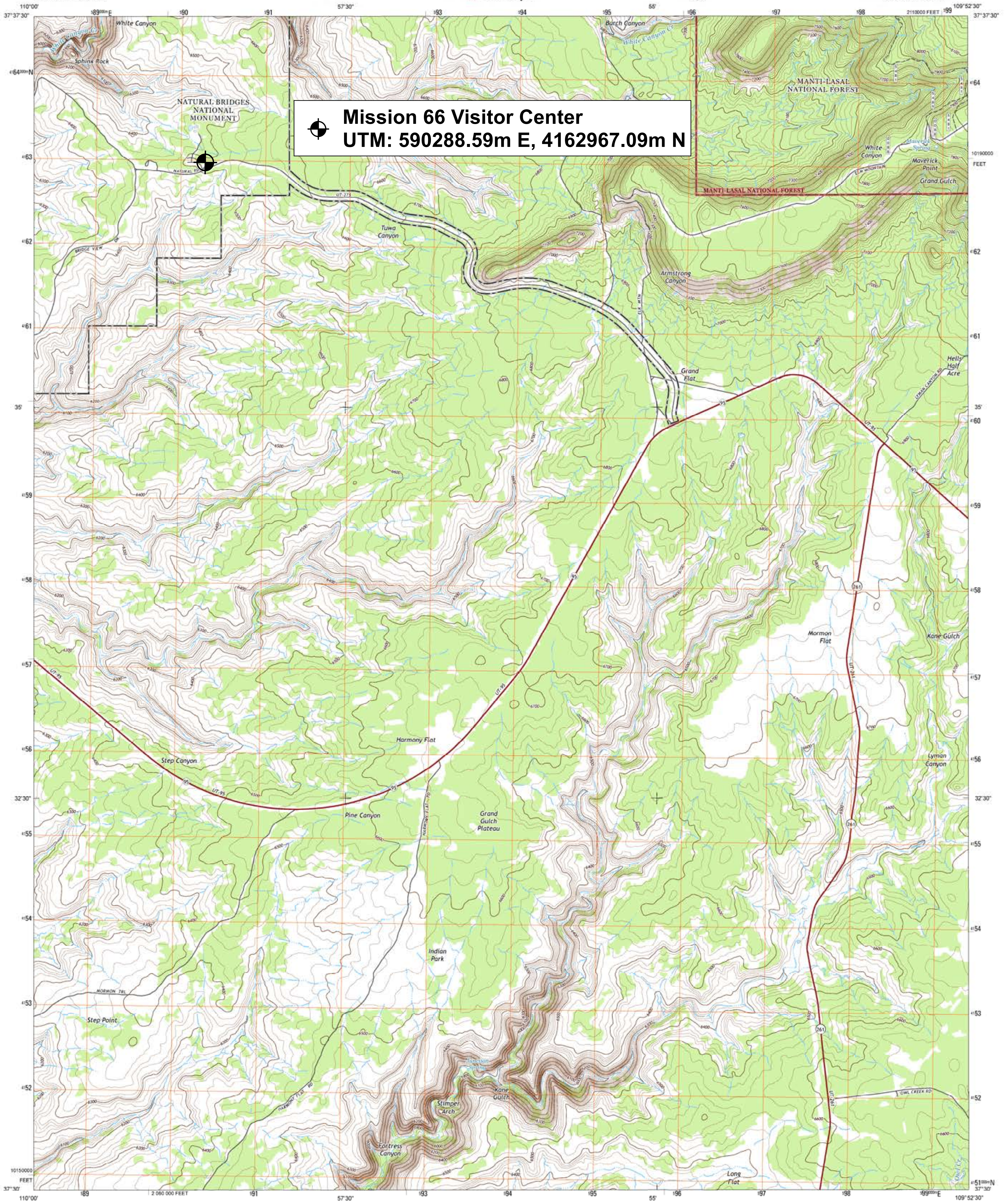
Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center
Name of Property

San Juan County, Utah
County and State



11

of 11. UT_San Juan County_NABR Mission 66 Visitor Center_0011

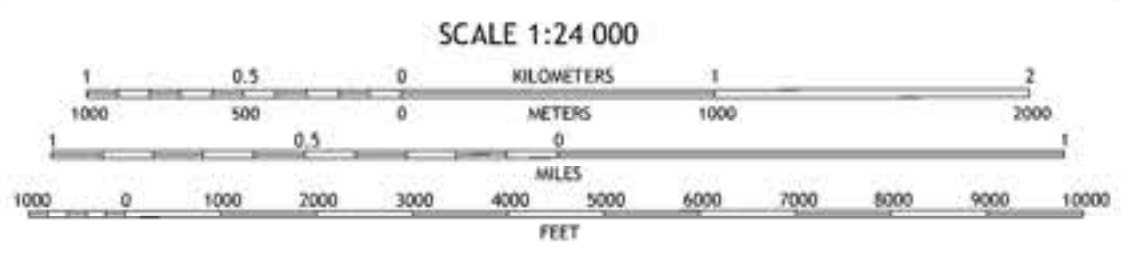
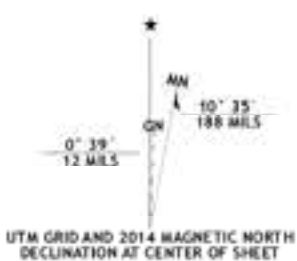


Mission 66 Visitor Center
UTM: 590288.59m E, 4162967.09m N

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1 000 meter grid; Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 12S
10 000-foot ticks; Utah Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands with government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

Imagery.....NAIP, June 2011
Roads.....HERE, ©2013
Roads within US Forest Service Lands.....FSTopo Data
with limited Forest Service updates, 2013
Names.....GNS, 2013
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2011
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 1999
Boundaries.....Multiple sources; see metadata file 1972_2013
Public Land Survey System.....BLM, 2011



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
PS Primary Route	PS Passenger Route
	PS High Clearance Route
	State Route

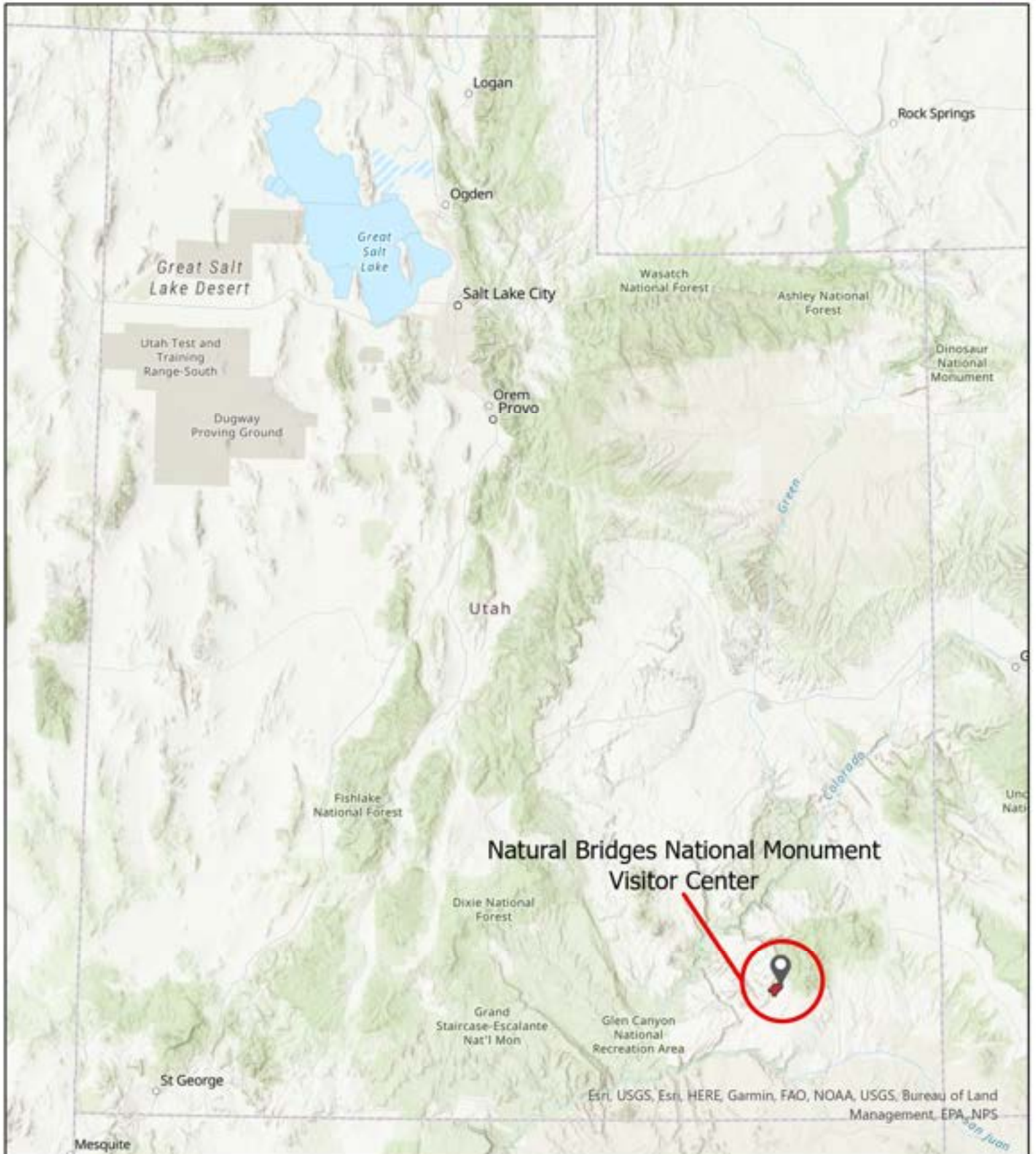
Check with local Forest Service unit for current travel conditions and restrictions.

1	2	3	1 The Cheesecake
4	5	6	2 Woodenshoe Buttes
7	8	7	3 Kipsala Point
		8	4 Moss Back Butte
			5 South Long Point
			6 Pollys Pasture
			7 Cedar Mesa North
			8 Snow Flat Spring Cave



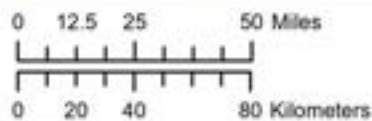
Figure 1: Mission 66 Resources - Project Location
Natural Bridges National Monument
San Juan County, Utah

Southeast Utah Group
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



**Natural Bridges National Monument
Visitor Center**

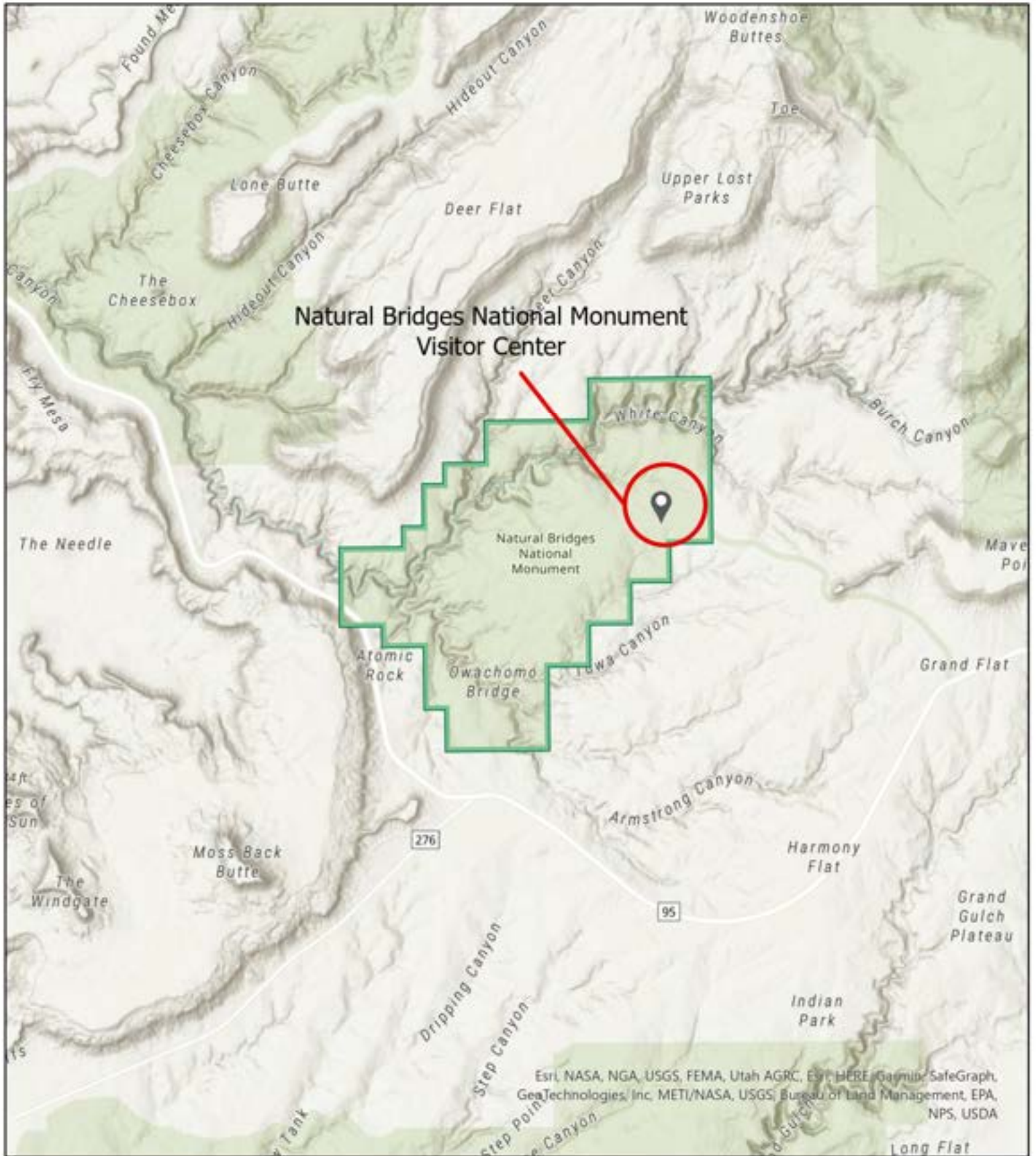
Natural Bridges NM Visitor Center
San Juan County, Utah
Lat/Long: 37.609356, -109.977044
Horizontal Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12



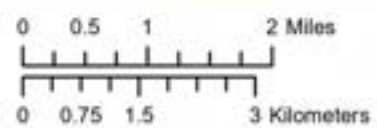
Southeast Utah Group GIS
June 2022
Data Sources: NPS Park Data, ESRI BaseData

Figure 2: Mission 66 Resources - Project Vicinity
Natural Bridges National Monument
San Juan County, Utah

Southeast Utah Group
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Natural Bridges NM Visitor Center
San Juan County, Utah
Lat/Long: 37.609356, -109.977044
Horizontal Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12



Southeast Utah Group GIS
June 2022
Data Sources: NPS Park Data, ESRI BaseData

Figure 3: Mission 66 Resources - Project Overview
Natural Bridges National Monument
San Juan County, Utah

Southeast Utah Group
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Natural Bridges NM Visitor Center

San Juan County, Utah

Lat/Long: 37.609356, -109.977044

Horizontal Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12

0 200 400 800 Feet



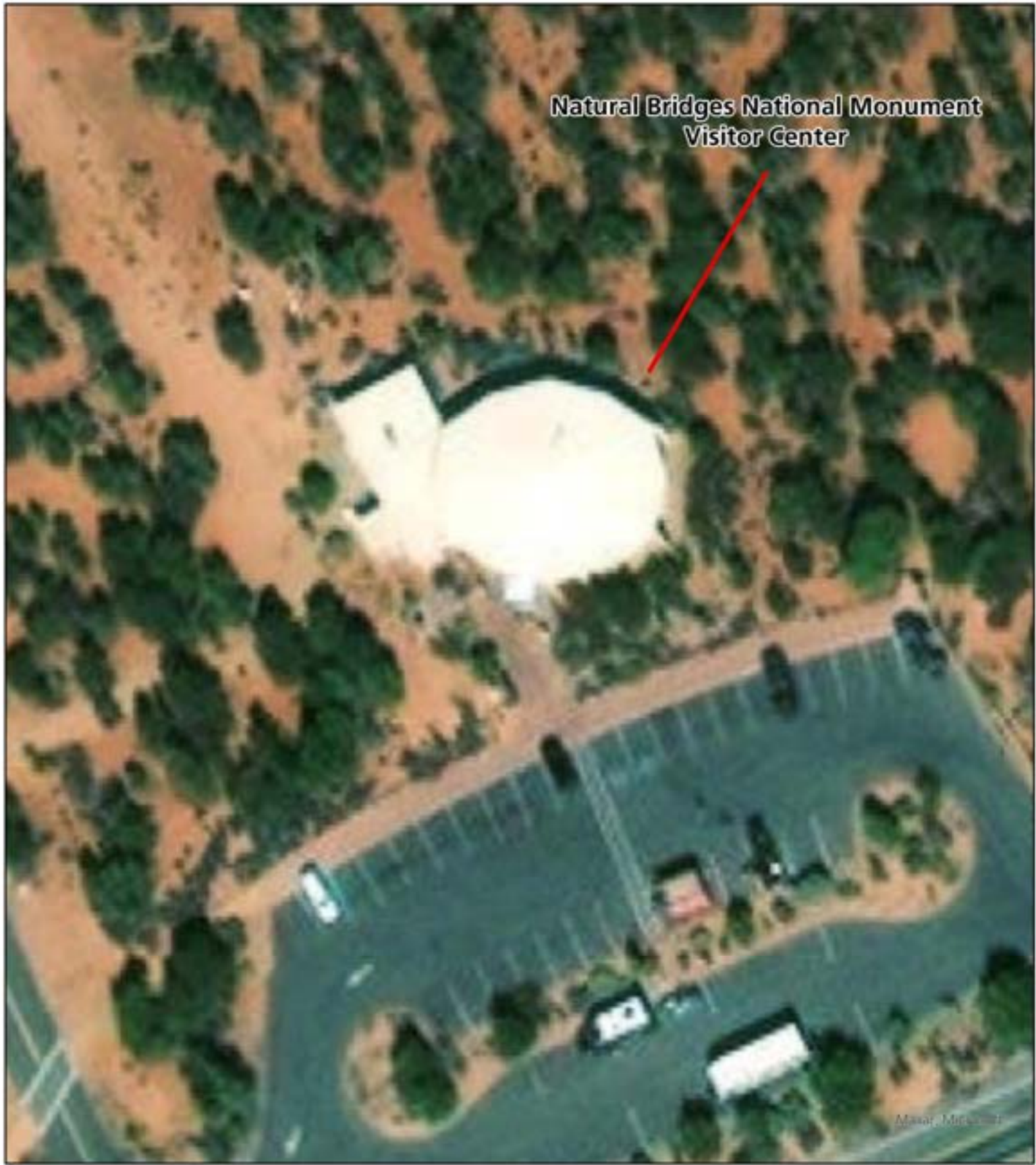
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Southeast Utah Group GIS

June 2022

Data Sources: NPS Park Data, ESRI BaseData



Natural Bridges National Monument
Visitor Center

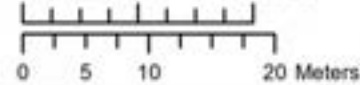
Natural Bridges NM Visitor Center

San Juan County, Utah

Lat/Long: 37.609356, -109.977044

Horizontal Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12

0 15 30 60 Feet



Southeast Utah Group GIS
June 2022

Data Sources: NPS Park Data, ESRI BaseData