



# Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc.

2632 S.E. 162<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Portland, Oregon 97236  
Phone (503) 761-6605 Fax (503) 761-6620

Vancouver Phone (360) 696-7473  
E-mail: [ainw@ainw.com](mailto:ainw@ainw.com)  
Web: [www.ainw.com](http://www.ainw.com)

June 28, 2004

Angela J. Findley  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc.  
400 SW Sixth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204-1628

Re: Assessment of the National Register of Historic Places Eligibility  
Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge  
AINW Report No. 1297

Dear Ms. Findley:

Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc. (AINW), has conducted an assessment of significance for the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge (1924) that spans the Columbia River from Hood River, Hood River County, Oregon, to White Salmon, Klickitat County, Washington (Figure 1). The assessment is part of the proposed Tier III phase of the SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study. The Existing Corridor Fixed Span Bridge for All Modes alternatives were under study in the 2003 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (Federal Highway Administration, Washington State Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Transportation, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, and U.S. Coast Guard 2003). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is acting as the lead Federal Agency for the SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study. The three alternatives, EC-1, EC-2, and EC-3, include demolishing and replacing the existing bridge and the construction of a new bridge at one of the alternative alignments. The preliminary preferred alternative is the EC-2 West Alignment, which would be a new bridge structure directly adjacent to the west side of the existing bridge.

The Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge is a 1.4-kilometer- (km) (0.9-mile-[mi]) long steel interstate bridge that was privately built but has been owned by the Port of Hood River since 1950 (*The Hood River News* 1998). The bridge is not currently listed as a significant historic bridge in either Oregon or Washington. As noted in our Tier II reports (Chapman and Fagan 2003; Ozbun and Fagan 2002:2) during an Oregon bridge survey in the 1980s, the bridge was assigned to a reserve category, indicating the bridge was not considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at that time, but that it did exhibit some historical and technological importance (Smith et al. 1989:267, 288). The bridge was inventoried in Washington during a 1980 bridge survey, but it was minimally recorded and it was not noted as eligible for listing in the NRHP in the statewide Historic Bridge Survey (Michael Houser, personal communication June 21, 2004).

The steel-truss toll bridge consists of a 79.4-meter (m) (262-foot [ft]) through-truss Pennsylvania-Petit vertical-lift span and 19 63-m (208-ft) steel deck-truss secondary spans (Smith et al. 1989:288). The bridge has a vertical clearance of 21.9 m (72.3 ft), which is an adequate height to allow most tugs to pass under without lifting the span (Port of Hood River

2000). The bridge rests on original concrete piers and has an open-grate steel deck that was added in 1951-1952, replacing the original wood plank deck.

*Recommendations for NRHP Eligibility and Level of Effect*

AINW recommends that the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. These eligibility recommendations and a historic context statement are found in the attached *Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties Section 106 Documentation Form*. AINW finds that the proposed removal of the bridge will have an adverse effect on the historic structure. A description of the proposed action and the effect of the action on the bridge can be found in the attached *Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties Section 106 Level of Effect Form*.

The Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge is recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its role in Oregon and Washington transportation history as the second oldest bridge-crossing on the Columbia River; under Criterion B for its association with builder C. N. McDonald, contractor and Vice-president of the Gilpin Construction Company; and under Criterion C, as a representation of the Pennsylvania Petit structural system and for the vertical lift-span that was added in 1938-1940 because of the higher river-water level that was created by the Bonneville Dam.

Previous to the present study, informal inquiries regarding the historical significance of the bridge were made with staff historic preservation specialists at the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). The Oregon SHPO representative offered an opinion regarding NRHP eligibility on January 14, 2003, by noting that the bridge retains enough integrity to be eligible, but that a comparison of the bridge with similar Pennsylvania-Petit bridges in Oregon and Washington was necessary for a complete evaluation. Comparisons have been accomplished as part of the current phase of study and are detailed in the attached Documentation Form.

As part of the earlier phase of documentation process and development of mitigation measures, the Oregon SHPO representative also recommended coordination with the Washington OAHP representative. The Oregon SHPO offered to act as the lead State Agency in the Section 106 coordination and assessment process, but suggested that Washington, as the secondary State Agency, be copied on correspondence and included as a signatory of any memorandum of agreement that is developed to specify appropriate mitigation measures (Christine Curran, Preservation Specialist, Oregon SHPO, personal communication January 14, 2003). Michael Houser, Architectural Historian with the OAHP, agreed with the Oregon SHPO's assessment and recommendations (personal communication January 16, 2003, and June 21, 2004).

*Proposed Mitigation Measures*

Both the Oregon and Washington preservation office representatives offered suggestions in January 2003 for possible mitigation should the bridge be determined eligible and its removal considered an adverse effect. Both will likely recommend photographic and structural documentation following the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) specifications.

*Summary and Recommendations*

In summary, the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge contains qualities that contribute to its NRHP eligibility. Removal of the bridge is considered an adverse effect; however, mitigation measures including a photographic documentation and historical narrative of the structure, and locating the original construction and vertical-lift modification plans, could be used to preserve a record of the historically important physical characteristics of the bridge.

AINW recommends that the Section 106 Documentation Form be submitted on behalf of the FHWA, acting as the lead Federal Agency for the SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study, to the Oregon SHPO, with a copy to the Washington OAHP. A request for concurrence of this determination of eligibility should be submitted to the Oregon SHPO and the Washington OAHP. Upon SHPO and OAHP concurrence, mitigation measures including historical documentation should be developed on behalf of the FHWA in consultation with the Oregon SHPO and Washington OAHP.

Sincerely,



*for* Judith A. Chapman, M.A.  
Architectural Historian



John L. Fagan, Ph.D.  
President/Senior Archaeologist

### **References**

Chapman, Judith S., and John L. Fagan

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2002 *Tier II Cultural Resource Analysis of Three Possible Corridors for the SR-35 Columbia River Crossing*. Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc. Report No. 244. Prepared for Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc., Portland.

Port of Hood River

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1989 *Historic Highway Bridges of Oregon*. 2nd edition. Oregon Historical Society Press, Portland.

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