

AL-I-A-090

State Roads Commission Water Trough

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 02-04-2016

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ☐
no ☒

Property Name: State Roads Commission Water Trough Inventory Number: AL-I-A-090
Address: National Pike (US 40 SCN) West of Orleans Road Historic district: yes ☒ no
City: Piney Grove N of Little Orleans Zip Code: 21766 County: Allegany
USGS Quadrangle(s): Artemas
Property Owner: Maryland State Highway Administration Tax Account ID Number: NA
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): NA Tax Map Number: 0010
Project: US 40 Scenic from West Shipley Rd to Mann Rd Agency: Maryland State Highway Administration
Agency Prepared By: Maryland State Highway Administration
Preparer's Name: Consultant Architectural Historian Matt Manning Date Prepared: 08/23/2013

Documentation is presented in: _____

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended _____ Eligibility not recommended
Criteria: X A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: _____

Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: yes Listed: yes

Site visit by MHT Staff yes ☒ no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

The State Roads Commission (SRC) Water Trough is an approximately 18x54-inch concrete water trough situated along the north edge of US 40 Scenic west of Orleans Road in Piney Grove, Maryland. Water troughs were once common along Maryland's major highways, but with the rise of automobile travel, they gradually became obsolete. However, during the early stages of America's highway revival in the 1910s and 20s, water troughs remained important roadside amenities for travelers of all kinds. This particular trough was placed in 1915. The surrounding rural area includes single-family dwellings and small farmsteads constructed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The trough is located near the driveway of the 19th Century House and Service Building (AL-I-A-001). The property includes a springhouse close to the highway. The spring currently runs under the trough and beneath the pavement via a corrugated metal pipe. At one time, it provided water for the trough.

The trough is oriented on an east-west axis with its long sides parallel to the highway. It is constructed of poured concrete and is 18 inches tall with a flat base and canted sides; seams from the formwork are still apparent. The edges along the top and sides are beveled 45 degrees. The south elevation, facing the road, is marked "S.R.C. 1915." The letters and year are composed of only straight lines and appear to have been cast into the concrete when it was formed. A small hole near the top of the trough's west side reveals the former location of a pipe that provided water from the adjacent spring. The center of the north elevation is notched at the top; here, the water drained into the ditch below and through a pipe under the road. The concrete at and below the notch has

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Eligibility recommended ☒ Eligibility not recommended ☐

Criteria: ☒ A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

MHT Comments:

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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

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Reviewer, National Register Program

11/26/13

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12/2/13

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been eroded by the continual flow of water, and the trough's dark gravel aggregate is visible.

The SRC Water Trough currently rests on a concrete end section for the corrugated metal pipe beneath the highway. The trough is no longer used to hold water and has been repurposed as a planting bed by the adjacent property owner. Two solar-powered stake lights have been placed in the soil among the vegetation.

History/Context

The SRC Water Trough was placed by the Maryland State Roads Commission (SRC) along this segment of US 40 in 1915 as part of improvements to the National Pike. The National Pike is the common term for the extension of the National Road in Maryland that connected Baltimore to the beginning of the federally funded portion of the road in Cumberland.

From the early to mid-nineteenth century, the National Road, including the National Pike, was the primary route between the Atlantic Coast and the Ohio River. At its peak, a near constant stream of travelers, stage coaches, and Conestoga wagons followed the road between Wheeling and Baltimore. Taverns and wagon stands were located almost every mile along the highway.

With the advent of the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century, traditional roads lost importance; neglected, many fell into disrepair. The National Road was in better condition than most highways at the dawn of the twentieth century, and a combination of nostalgia and the efforts of the Good Roads Movement drew attention to the highway. Motorists and auto clubs praised the road for its scenery and historic value. The National Road was featured prominently in 1904 when the American Automobile Association used the route to travel to St. Louis for the World's Fair. In 1906, Representative George Pearre of Maryland introduced a Congressional bill to reconstruct the Cumberland Road and restore the landmarks along its route.

As driving increased, more motorists called for updates to the old roads, complaining of poor conditions and impassable segments. The Maryland General Assembly established the SRC in 1908 and transferred responsibility of road construction and maintenance from the Maryland Geological Survey. The SRC developed plans for a state road system linking communities throughout Maryland. Many of the planned roads followed preexisting routes established by turnpikes, including the National Pike and the National Road.

Also in 1908, the SRC announced plans to build a state road from Redhouse in Garrett County to the Washington County line at Belle Grove; the route would improve much of the preexisting National Pike in Garrett and Allegany counties. The portion of the National Pike in Allegany County was reconstructed by the SRC between 1911 and 1915. A map of Maryland's road system from 1910 shows segments of the route as either under contract or in the planning stages. Among the sections of state highway completed in 1915 was a 7.81-mile, 14-foot wide macadamized segment between Green Ridge and the Washington County Line. This segment would have encompassed the Piney Grove area and the SRC Water Trough. Although the trough must have been added at the completion of the road, the SRC report makes no specific mention of any water troughs placed along the state's highways.

The water trough was an indispensable part of the National Road throughout its history. One could be found at every tavern and wagon stand along the route, and water, flowing from a nearby spring, was always free to travelers and their teams. Commonly, troughs were located before or along steep segments of mountain roads where they offered a spot for temporary rest and refreshment. Some troughs became well-known stops along the route. East of Uniontown in Pennsylvania, the "Big Watering Trough" at Laurel Hill was an essential stop for water on hot days, and became popular despite the lack of a nearby tavern or stable.

With the advent of the automobile, cars largely displaced horses along the nation's highways. Although fewer horses were

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Eligibility recommended _____

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travelling the roads, water troughs remained important stopping points. Steep grades often resulted in overheating engines or brakes, and water troughs that once rehydrated thirsty horses became useful for refilling radiators. In 1906, the Big Watering Trough was rebuilt with concrete. Postcards from the site show the trough and an adjacent building that evolved from a store and refreshment stand in the early 1920s to a restaurant and dance hall during the 1930s. According to one report in 1925, more than 75 percent of vehicles traveling east on the Laurel Hill section of the National Road stopped at the Big Watering Trough to replenish their radiator water. The building is no longer standing, but the concrete trough remains accessible along the north side of the road.

The troughs were so useful to auto travelers that in 1919, the Pennsylvania State Highway Department developed a standardized design for concrete water troughs. The plans detailed a seven-foot-wide trough to be supported on a base of rubble, brick, or concrete. Galvanized steel pipes supplied the water and drained the overflow. It is not known how many troughs were constructed or how many remain. One possible example is located along the National Road (Old Route 40) west of Addison, Pennsylvania. The trough is in poor condition and is being used as a flower bed.

In Maryland, at least one other water trough was used by motorists along the National Pike during the 1910s. In March 1915, the Washington Post printed a driving guide for automobile tourists traveling along the rebuilt National Pike between Washington, D.C., and Cumberland. At that time, the 14-mile segment between Hancock and Flintstone encompassing the Piney Grove area had not been reconstructed and remained unpaved. The guide notes a water trough located along the east slope of Sideling Hill, but none along Town Hill or near Piney Grove. The Sideling Hill section of the highway had recently been macadamized and the water trough in the guide may have been a modernized trough similar to the one later placed at Town Hill. US 40 was realigned over Sideling Hill in the early 1950s and the Sideling Hill water trough was either removed or has been covered in undergrowth along the unused portion of the old road.

In 1916, Maryland State Senator William F. Chesley introduced a bill authorizing the SRC to erect water troughs in St. Mary's County and other parts of the state where necessary. Although the bill was never passed into law, it demonstrated the level of awareness of the growing needs of the state's highway system and the importance of highway water troughs to early automobile travel.

The SRC Water Trough is one of three troughs known to remain along former or current state highways in western Maryland. One other is located along the original National Road in Eckhart Mines east of Frostburg. This triangular iron trough is fed by an underground spring on the south side of Old National Pike, west of US 40. Known as Kelly's Pump, the trough has been present in some form since before 1911, and the spring may have served nineteenth century travelers.

The third remaining water trough is located on eastbound MD 135, along Backbone Mountain west of MD 38 in Garrett County. Like the SRC Water Trough, the MD 135 trough is constructed of poured concrete; however, it has a taller base, a shallower basin, and lacks any markings. The segment of MD 135 was reconstructed by the SRC in 1929, and the trough may have been put in place at that time; SRC reports do not describe a water trough along this route. The trough still held water as of June 2010.

The SRC Water Trough is located at the base of Town Hill adjacent to a 19th-century dwelling and spring house. The presence of the spring house along the road suggests the possibility that a preexisting trough supplied travelers along the Bank Road during the 1800s. Water troughs were commonly located at taverns or wagon stands, but no evidence proves the nearby house served as a tavern. In "The Old Pike," Thomas Searight states that a tavern was located at the eastern foot of Town Hill, in an area called Piney Plains. The tavern is not described but is said to have been run by Dennis Hoblitzell, possibly before 1830. Samuel Cessna later took over the tavern which was also a stop for stage and wagon lines. According to Allegany County records, neither Hoblitzell nor Cessna owned property in the area, and the grounds at the 19th Century House and Service Building do not appear

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large enough for a stable or wagon yard. However, aerial photographs from 1947 and highway construction documents from the late 1960s reveal the presence of several small buildings and a gas pump on the south side of the road, opposite the water trough. A cleared circular area south of the buildings might have at one time provided a yard for travelers and their teams.

The area along the highway has undergone minor changes since the improvements made by the SRC in 1915. This segment of the National Pike became part of US Route 40 in 1927 and was designated US 40 Scenic in 1965 when US 40 was rerouted to the south. At that time, Orleans Road was realigned to form a T intersection with US 40 Scenic east of the water trough. The nearby gas pump and all but one adjacent building, a small shed, were removed sometime afterward. However, with traffic and development concentrated elsewhere, two-lane US 40 Scenic has retained much of its rural character; the route is part of Maryland's Historic National Road Scenic Byway.

Significance Evaluation

The SRC Water Trough was evaluated for significance under National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Criteria A, B, and C. The water trough was placed by the SRC along the National Pike as part of general highway improvements in 1915. The National Road and its related highways in Maryland were some of the earliest routes to be rediscovered with the advent of the automobile. Water troughs, originally used by horses and other livestock along the road, remained relevant as travel transitioned to motor vehicles. The decision by the SRC to construct a permanent concrete trough at the foot of Town Hill underscores the object's important role in sustaining early automobile travel along highways. The presence of the water trough reveals how early autos were operated and maintained, and its location near a spring at the foot of a long ascent is important to understanding its function. The SRC Water Trough is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with early automobile travel and the rediscovery and improvement of the National Pike in the early twentieth century.

Research has not revealed significant persons associated with the object, and it is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B.

Although the use of concrete corresponds to the materials incorporated in the SRC's standardized plans for bridges and small structures, its implementation as a water trough in 1915 does not demonstrate new advances in highway design or technology. No other concrete water troughs of this design are known to have been constructed, and the few concrete troughs placed along the National Road vary greatly in form. It is unknown if the SRC Water Trough influenced the designs of later roadside troughs such as those standardized in Pennsylvania. Therefore, the SRC Water Trough cannot be said to embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The trough does not represent the work of a master nor does it possess high artistic value; therefore the SRC Water Trough is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C. NRHP Criterion D was not evaluated as part of this study.

The SRC Water Trough has not been altered aside from ordinary wear resulting from time and use. Its original concrete form and incised lettering remain intact, and its location at the roadside is unchanged. Aided by the relocation of US 40, its setting remains much the same, including the adjacent house and springhouse that were present when the trough was placed in 1915. Although no water currently runs through the trough, its original function is evident; it retains all aspects of its integrity, including design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, feeling, and association.

The SRC Water Trough is recommended eligible for the NRHP with a period of significance coinciding with its creation in 1915. The boundary is confined to the extents of the trough itself within SHA's right-of-way limits for US 40 Scenic. The object is approximately 18 inches wide by 54 inches long (6.75 square feet).

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Eligibility recommended _____

Eligibility not recommended _____

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

MHT Comments:

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Date

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Eligibility not recommended _____

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Reviewer, National Register Program_____
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Eligibility recommended _____

Eligibility not recommended _____

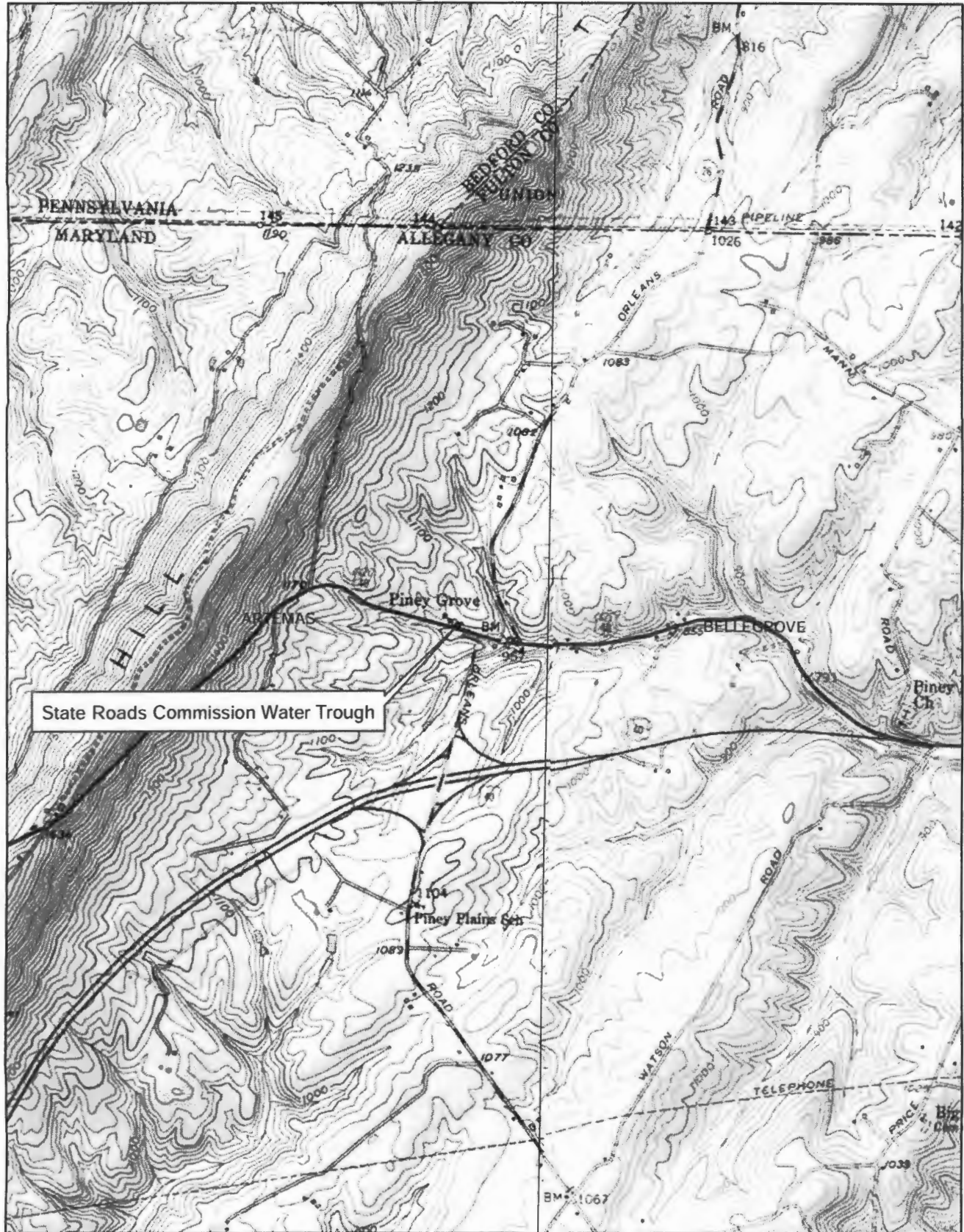
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State Roads Commission Water Trough (AL-I-A-090)

US 40 Scenic, west of Orleans Road



USGS 7.5' Quadrangle - Artemas
1:24,000
Allegany County



Photo Log

Project No.: AL292A21

Project Name: US 40 Scenic from West Shipley Road to Mann Road

MIHP No.: AL-I-A-090

MIHP Name: State Roads Commission (SRC) Water Trough

County: Allegany

Photographer: M. Manning

Date: August 2, 2013

Ink and Paper Combination: Epson UltraChrome pigmented ink/Epson Premium Luster Photo Paper

CD/DVD: Verbatim, CD-R, Archival Gold

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AL-1-A-090

State Roads Commission Water Trough

Allegany Co. MD

M. Manning

8/2/213

MD SHPO

View east along US 40 Scenic (National Pike)

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SRC Water Trough

Allegany Co. MD

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8/2/2013

MD SHPO

View west along US 40 Scenic (National Pike)

2/7



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SRC Water Trough

Allegheny Co. MD

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Water trough; view NW showing Springhouse (right)
and barn (background)

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SRC Water Trough

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MD SHPO

Water trough with house in background; view NE

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SRC Water Trough

Allegheny Co. MD

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View NE from US 40 Scenic (National Pike)

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SRC Water Trough

Allegany Co. MD

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MD SHpo

View NW from US 40 Scenic (National Pike)

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SRC Water Trough

Allegany Co. MD

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North (rear) side of water trough; view south to
US 40 Scenic (National Pike)

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