

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NR 9/19/07

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cotter Tunnel

other names/site number Site #MR0080

2. Location

street & number Under U.S. 62 east of Marion County Road 724

not for publication

city or town Cotter

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Marion

code 089

zip code 72626

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cashee Matthews 7/5/07

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Cotter Tunnel
Name of Property

Marion County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
--------------	-----------------	--

	buildings
	sites
1	structures
	objects
1	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation STONE
walls STONE, CONCRETE

roof STONE, CONCRETE
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Engineering

Period of Significance

1903-1957

Significant Dates

1903-1957

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Cotter Tunnel
Name of Property

Marion County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 1.5 acres

UTM References

(See additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	540746	4014381	3			
2	15	540583	4014681	4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 21, 2007
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad
street & number 514 N. Orner telephone _____
city or town Carthage state MO zip code 64836

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Cotter Tunnel is located in the Cotter vicinity in Marion County, Arkansas. The tunnel is 1,034 feet long and is located on the former Missouri Pacific White River Division line, now the Missouri and Northern Arkansas Railroad. It is hewed through the solid stone of the ridge across the White River from Cotter.

ELABORATION

The Cotter Tunnel is located in the Cotter vicinity in Marion County, Arkansas. The tunnel is 1,034 feet long and is located on the former Missouri Pacific White River Division line, now the Missouri and Northern Arkansas Railroad. It is hewed through the solid stone of the ridge across the White River from Cotter. The tunnel's portals are unimproved.

The tunnel's northwest portal is unfinished and just consists of the stone of the mountainside. The southeast portal, on the other hand, has had shotcrete or similar material sprayed on it, presumably to help prevent some of the rock from caving in. Concrete reinforcement has also been placed a few feet inside the southeastern end.

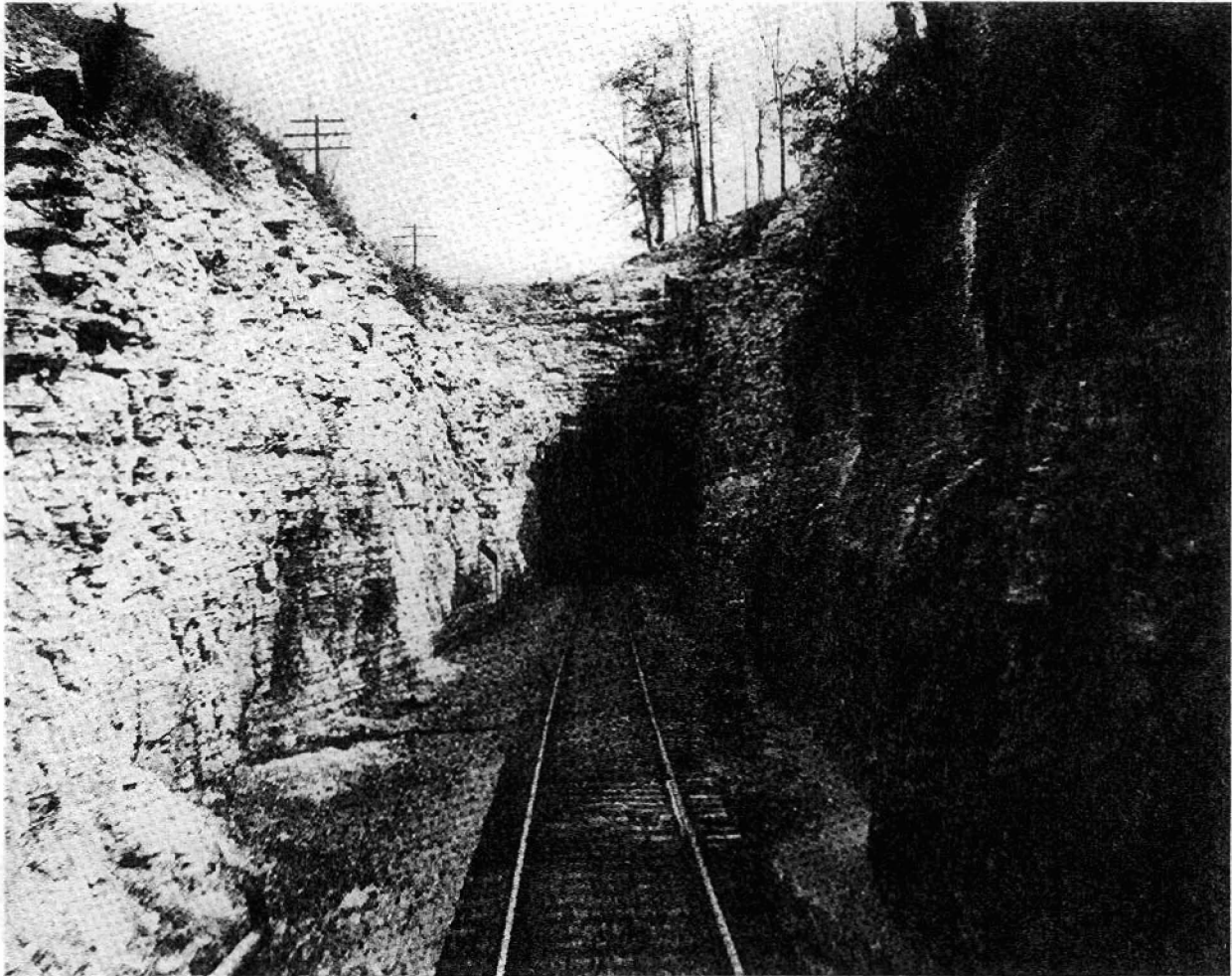
Integrity

The Cotter Tunnel retains good integrity. With the exception of the shotcrete on the southeast portal, the tunnel has had few modifications since it was constructed in 1903-1905 and still reflects early twentieth-century tunnel construction methods and technology. In addition, the area around the tunnel remains a very rural area, which reflects the time that the tunnel was constructed.

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Cotter Tunnel Northwest Portal (c.1943)

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Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Even though the majority of railroad construction took place in Arkansas in the late 1800s after the Civil War, there was still some construction taking place in the first part of the twentieth century. One of the new railroad lines that was built during the first decade of the 1900s was the White River Division of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which connected Diaz and Batesville, Arkansas, with Springfield and Carthage, Missouri. In order to complete the line, it was necessary to build several tunnels, including the Cotter Tunnel in the Cotter vicinity, one of a total of seven railroad tunnels that have been built in Arkansas. Due to its important role in the development of railroad transportation in the Marion County area, the Cotter Tunnel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance under Criterion A**. The Cotter Tunnel is also being nominated with **local significance under Criterion C** for its engineering significance as the only tunnel in the Cotter area and for its reflection of early twentieth century railroad tunnel technology.

ELABORATION

though the first railroad line in the United States was laid in the late 1820s, very little railroad construction was completed in Arkansas prior to the Civil War. The Memphis & Little Rock Railroad, which had laid some track westward from Hopefield and eastward from Little Rock, and the Mississippi, Ouachita, & Red River, which had laid a few miles of track inland from Chicot and Arkansas City, were the only railroads to complete any construction prior to 1860.¹

The Civil War, however, delayed the building of railroads by a decade, and it was not until the 1870s that railroad building took off again. The St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern built a line south from St. Louis to the Arkansas border. They wanted to go to Texas, and purchased the Cairo & Fulton. Although the Cairo & Fulton had not done any construction, it had secured rights-of-way prior to the Civil War. The St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern reached Little Rock by 1872, and had completed the first line across Arkansas when it reached Texarkana in 1874.²

The second railroad line to reach across the state incorporated the Memphis & Little Rock Railroad and the newly constructed Little Rock & Fort Smith, which had reached the coal fields of Clarksville in 1874 and Fort Smith five years later. The Little Rock & Fort Smith was purchased by Jay Gould (who already owned the Iron Mountain lines) in 1882, and became part of the Iron Mountain system – the largest railroad system in the state in the late nineteenth century.³

¹ Elliott West. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987, reprint of 1941 publication, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*

³ West, p. 55.

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When the realization came that only railroads could be used to exploit the vast tracts of virgin timber in Arkansas, railroads and the timber industry developed as one. As a result, railroad lines were constructed further and further into the forests to enable the harvesting of timber, and occasionally the spurs were linked to become new through lines. The boom in railroad construction also greatly influenced settlement patterns throughout Arkansas. Some towns that had thrived on river trade and travel disappeared and many new towns sprang to life along the railroad lines.⁴

The railroad line through the Cotter area was constructed by the Missouri Pacific Railway, which came into existence in 1872 out of a reorganization of the Pacific Railroad Company. (The Pacific Railroad Company broke ground on their first line in St. Louis on July 4, 1851.) In 1879, the railroad came under New York financier Jay Gould's control and he developed a system extending through Colorado, Nebraska, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana. The Missouri Pacific Railway merged with the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern in 1917 to become the Missouri Pacific Railroad. By the early 1980s, the Missouri Pacific had just less than 11,500 miles of track in eleven states, before it merged with the Union Pacific and Western Pacific Railroad companies on December 22, 1982.⁵

The surveying for a line through the Cotter area began c.1887 when Jay Gould had a survey party look for a route from the Bald Knob/Batesville area to Carthage, Missouri. Although the exact route looked at is not known, a proposed line is shown, in the 1892 Iron Mountain timetable, from Cushman's (near Batesville) to Carthage, generally on the south side of the White River.⁶ On February 8, 1901, the White River Railway was incorporated with the purpose of building a rail line from the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern line about two miles west of Batesville to the Marion/Boone County line via Independence, Izard, Baxter, and Marion counties. After more surveying of the proposed route, construction began on May 27, 1901, by starting to clear the right-of-way up the White River from White River Junction.⁷

Considering the mountainous terrain that the railroad line was being built through, construction proceeded fairly rapidly. By October 1901 more than ten miles of the line had all of its grading, trestles, and masonry work finished, and the other aspects of the construction were also moving rapidly.⁸ Passenger service on the line was established between Batesville and Penter's Bluff (near Guion), a distance of twenty miles, on May 26, 1902, and extended a further 25 miles to Mount Olive on November 14, 1902.⁹

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "About Missouri Pacific: A Brief Overview," from www.mo-pac.com/about.html.

⁶ Adams, Walter M. *The White River Railway*. Branson, MO: The Ozark Mountaineer, 1991, p. 11.

⁷ *id.*, p. 13, 15.

⁸ *id.*, p. 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21, 24.

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Although some surveying of the line occurred in the nineteenth century, final surveying of the line in the area of the Cotter Tunnel began early in 1903. It was no easy task, either, requiring a total of eight months and ten preliminary surveys in order to decide on a route from Lake's Ferry (Cotter) to the head of Roark Creek in Missouri. Even after conducting so many surveys, the route chosen was not going to be easy to construct – it would require the construction of five tunnels (four in Arkansas and one in Missouri), several deep cuts and fills, and many long, high trestles.¹⁰

By the time that the Cotter Tunnel was built in 1903-1904, railroad tunnel construction had been ongoing in the United States for approximately 70 years (the first railroad tunnel built in America was the Staple Bend Tunnel near East Conemaugh, Pennsylvania, built between November 1831 and June 1833 – NHL 04/19/94), but was relatively new to Arkansas. A couple of other tunnels that had been built in Arkansas by the time the Cotter Tunnel was built were the Winslow Tunnel in Washington County, which was built in the early 1880s, and the Charcoal Gap Tunnel outside of Eureka Springs, which was built c.1900 (Arkansas Register listed 04/04/07). However, four more tunnels would be built in the northwest part of the state at Cricket, Crest, Pyatt, and Conway by 1905 as additional rail lines were built through the mountains.¹¹

Construction of the Cotter Tunnel was getting under way by June 1903. Although the tunnel's relatively short length of 1,034 feet should have meant that it would have been easy to build, it was not the case. In early August 1903 an Irish laborer was killed when part of the partially completed tunnel caved in and the previous week fourteen workers were temporarily cut off by another cave-in. As a result, it was hard to get workers to work on the tunnel. The discovery of a sediment pocket near the tunnel's center, which had to be sealed with concrete, also slowed down the tunnel's completion.¹²

Completion of the White River Division north of Cotter depended on two crucial elements, completion of the bridge across the White River and completion of the Cotter Tunnel. Because of the tunnel's importance, three shifts of workers were assigned to its construction and they worked from both ends of the bluff. The railroad even installed electric lights to allow the night workers to work more quickly and efficiently. By October 1, 1903, according to the *Yellville Republican*, the tunnel was one-third completed.¹³

Although work on the tunnel progressed quickly through late 1903, another setback occurred in March 1904 when another cave-in seriously injured two workers. Even with the setback, the tunnel was holed through around April 1904, and enlarged enough so that a temporary track could be laid through it to allow workers

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 29.

¹¹ Information on the Cotter, Winslow, Cricket, Crest, and Cadron Ridge tunnels in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Adams, pp. 30, 32.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 32.

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to transport materials through the tunnel on hand cars. It was estimated that the tunnel would be ready for regular railroad service in early June.¹⁴

As with the construction of the Cricket and Crest tunnels, the completion of the Cotter Tunnel apparently did not meet the railroad's estimated date. In late June 1904, the *Mountain Echo* (Yellville) reported that laying the track through Marion County, which likely included the Cotter Tunnel "will be in progress in a short time."¹⁵ As a result, it was likely July or August before the tunnel was finished and ready for service.

After the line was completed and open to traffic, the Cotter Tunnel did have one other recorded collapse. On Saturday, January 19, 1906, as Train 206 was leaving Cotter and crossing the White River Bridge, the headlight picked up an obstruction at the mouth of the tunnel. It turned out that the portal of the tunnel had collapsed. The train returned to Cotter where the passengers spent the night in the Tremain Hotel. The line remained closed on Sunday. When the tunnel was inspected early Monday, January 21, 1906, the obstruction was found to not be nearly as bad as initially believed and the line was cleared and reopened by 8:30 a.m.¹⁶

The installation of shotcrete on the southeast portal and concrete reinforcement a few feet inside the southeastern end indicates that the 1906 incident was not the last trouble with the tunnel. However, compared to the Cricket Tunnel, the Cotter Tunnel has been relatively trouble free for the line.

The Cotter Tunnel has been in continuous use since its completion in 1904 and remains an important transportation link in the railroad network of northwestern Arkansas. In addition, it remains a good example of early twentieth century railroad tunnel technology. The tunnel is still the most fascinating and one of the most important parts of the former Missouri Pacific's line in Marion County, and an important element in the development of railroad travel in the area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Even though the majority of railroad construction took place in Arkansas in the late 1800s after the Civil War, there was still some construction taking place in the first part of the twentieth century. One of the new railroad lines that was built during the first decade of the 1900s was the White River Division of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which connected Diaz and Batesville, Arkansas, with Springfield and Carthage, Missouri. In order to complete the line, it was necessary to build several tunnels, including the Cotter Tunnel in the Cotter vicinity, one of a total of seven railroad tunnels that have been built in Arkansas. Due to its important role in the development of railroad transportation in the Marion County area, the Cotter Tunnel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**. The Cotter

¹⁴*Ibid*, pp. 35, 37.

¹⁵*Ibid*, p. 38.

¹⁶*Ibid*, p.64.

Cotter Tunnel

Name of Property

Marion County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
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Tunnel is also being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering significance as the only tunnel in the Cotter area and for its reflection of early twentieth century railroad tunnel technology.

Cotter Tunnel

Name of Property

Marion County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

"About Missouri Pacific: A Brief Overview," from www.mo-pac.com/about.html.

Adams, Walter M. *The White River Railway*. Branson, MO: The Ozark Mountaineer, 1991.

Information on the Cotter, Winslow, Cricket, Crest, Pyatt, and Cadron Ridge tunnels in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

West, Elliott. *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987
reprint of 1941 publication.

Cotter Tunnel

Name of Property

Marion County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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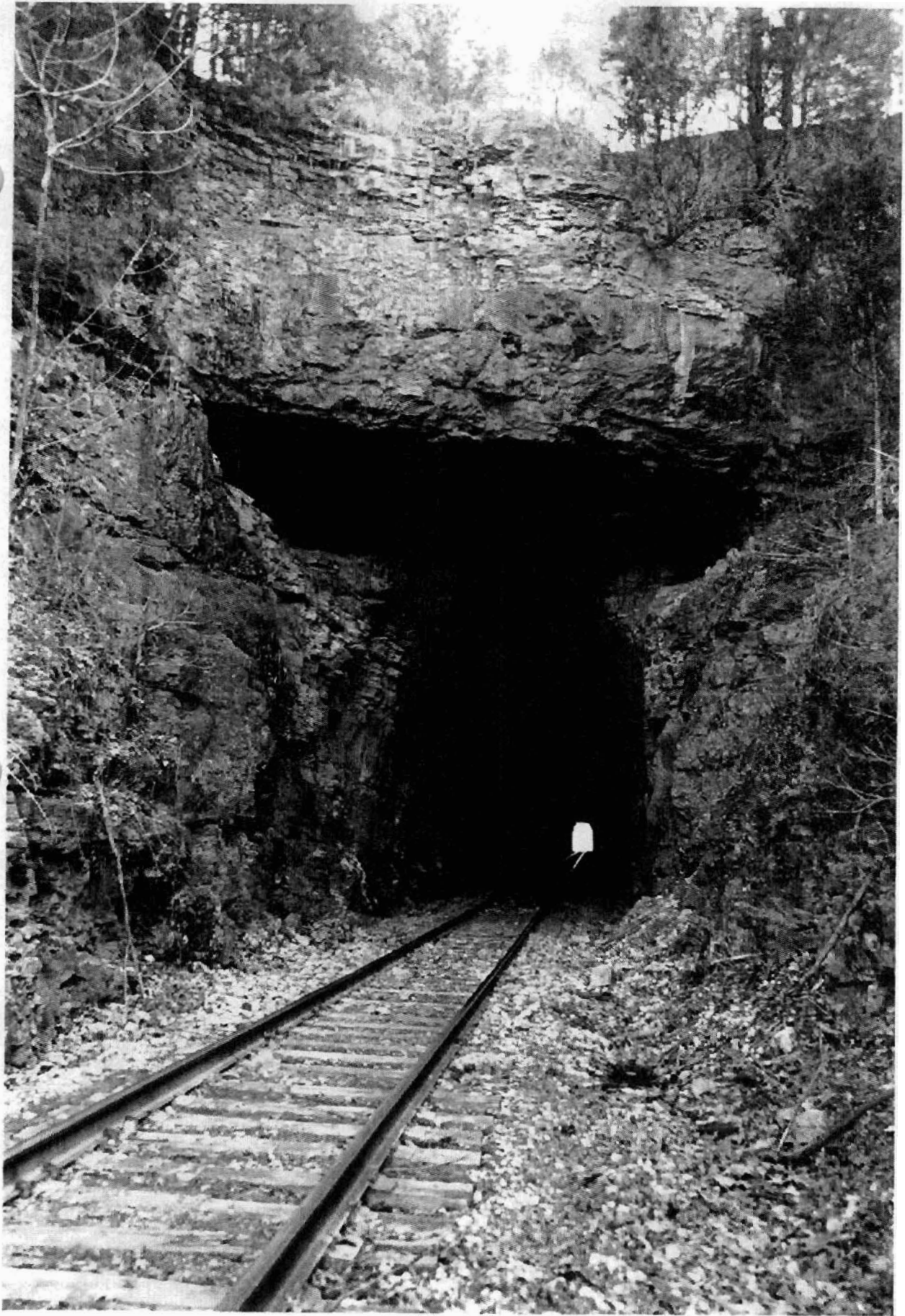
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

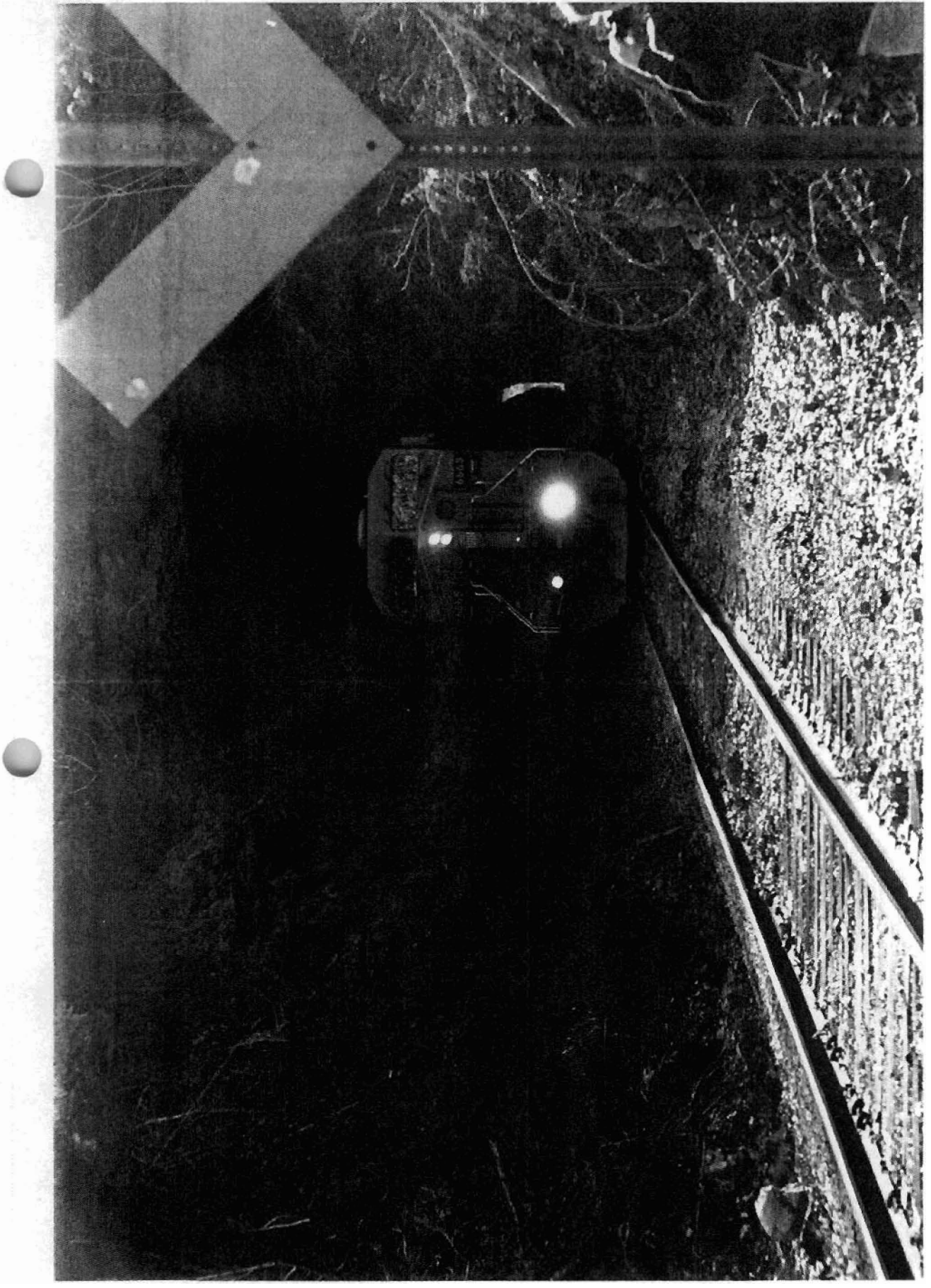
Beginning at a point 100 feet northwest of the northwest portal of the Cotter Tunnel, the boundary follows the former Missouri Pacific Railroad line (now the Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad line) to a point 100 feet southeast of the southeast portal of the Cotter Tunnel. The width of the boundary includes 25 feet on either side of the railroad right-of-way centerline.

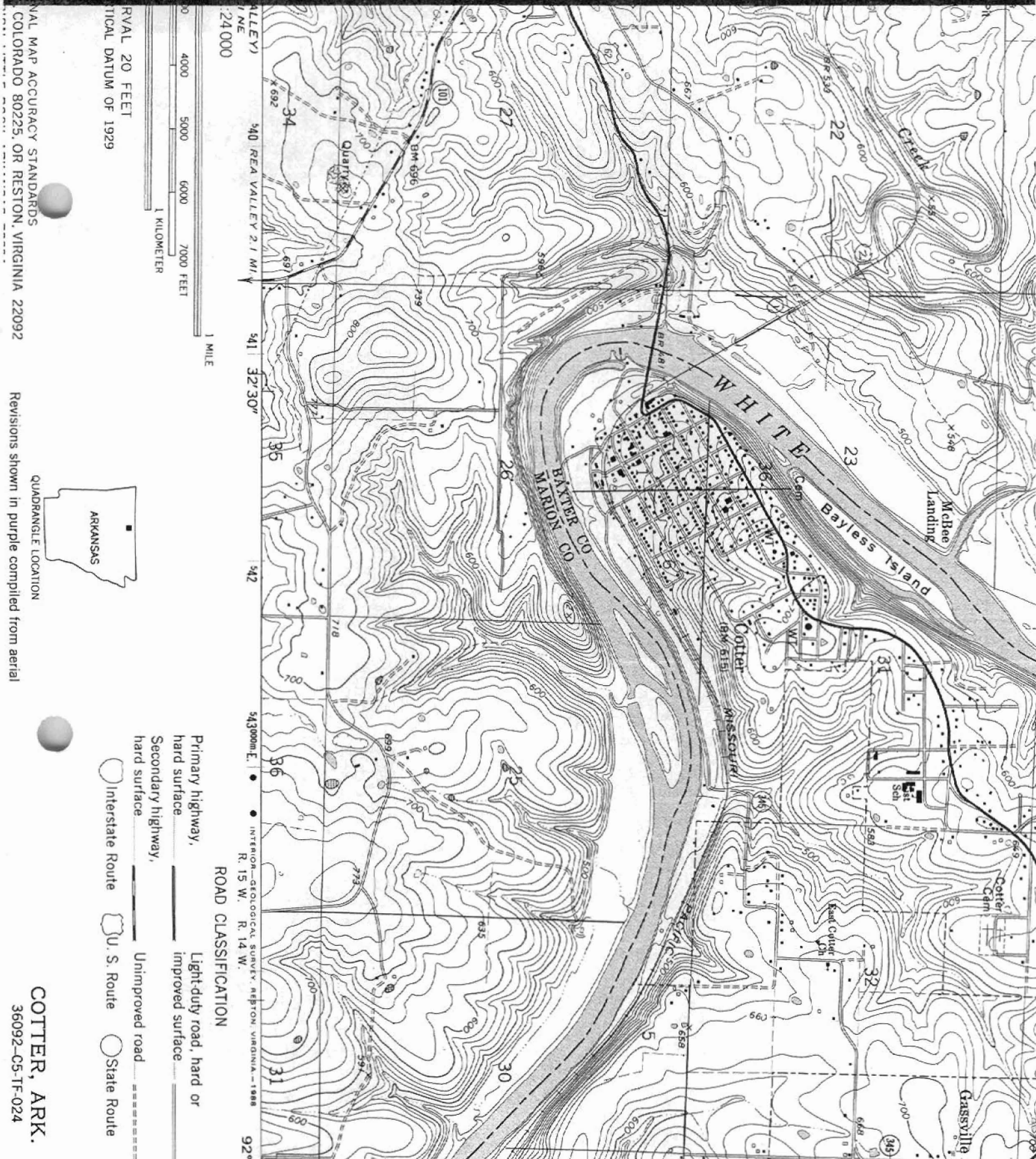
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary contains all of the land historically associated with the Cotter Tunnel.









RYAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

RYAL 20 FEET
 TICAL DATUM OF 1929

0 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
 1 KILOMETER

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

AR KANSAS

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
 Secondary highway, hard surface
 Unimproved road

Interstate Route
 U. S. Route
 State Route

COTTER, ARK.
 36092-C5-1F-024

1.1 MI. TO ARK. 126
 MOUNTAIN HOME 8 MI.

COTTER TUNNEL
 MARION COUNTY, AR

DTMs:
 1) 15/540746/401433
 2) 15/540583/401468

T. 19 N.
 T. 18 N.

4013
 4014

T. 19 N.
 4012000 N.

36° 15'
 92° 30'

(BUFFALO CITY)
 7556 III NW