

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR NR 1-24-07

# 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 *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 Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50

other names/site number Site #MS0295

### 2. Location

street & number U.S. 61 at the Delta Valley & Southern Railway Crossing

not for publication

city or town Delpro

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Mississippi code 093 zip code 72395

### 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.)

*Cecilia Matthews*

11/15/06

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

|              |                 |  |
|--------------|-----------------|--|
| 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)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related/locomotive  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related/locomotive  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
walls N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other STEEL  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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)

Statewide

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1954-1957

Significant Dates

1954-1957

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

General Electric, 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: Delta Valley & Southern Railway

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50  
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one.

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |                   |                   |                   |   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | <u>15</u>         | <u>764315</u>     | <u>3938235</u>    | 3 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
|   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |
| 2 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | 4 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
|   |                   |                   |                   |   |                   |                   |                   |

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 November 15, 2006  
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

#### Maps

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 Mike Wilson, c/o Delta Valley & Southern Railway Company  
street & number PO Box 308 telephone             
city or town Wilson state AR zip code 72395

**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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is a diesel-powered General Electric 50-ton center-cab switch locomotive built by General Electric in May 1954. It has been operated by the Delta Valley & Southern Railroad from the time of its construction until the present. The locomotive operates on the Delta Valley & Southern Railway line between Delpro and Evadale, Arkansas.

### ELABORATION

The general specifications for Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 are as follows:

Make: General Electric 50-ton diesel electric switch locomotive.

Builder: General Electric, Erie, Pennsylvania.

Horsepower: 300 hp.

Length: Approximately 35 feet.

Width: Approximately 10 feet.

Height: Approximately 15 feet.

Weight: 100,000 lbs.

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is a diesel-powered General Electric 50-ton switch locomotive built by General Electric at their Erie, Pennsylvania, plant in May 1954. It was built for the Delta Valley & Southern Railway, which continues to operate the locomotive today. The locomotive sits on two four-wheel truck sets. The locomotive has a "B-B" wheel configuration, meaning that each truck has two powered axles.

The body of the locomotive consists of a central cab with hoods at each end sheltering the two engines. Doors along the sides of the hoods allow access to the engines for repairs. The end of each hood contains metal louvers to allow cooling of the engines, and a single headlight is located in the center of each hood at the top. Walkways with metal railings go from the cab to ladders at each corner of the locomotive.

The locomotive is painted a dark greenish-black, and the sides of the cab have the words "D. V. & S / NO. 50" painted in yellow. The handrails along the walkways are painted in alternating bands of yellow and black and the sides and ends of the frame are also painted in alternating stripes of black and yellow.

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#### **Integrity**

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 possesses good integrity. Since Locomotive #50 was built, parts of the locomotive have been replaced and repaired. However, this is a normal practice for railroad rolling stock as parts wear out.

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 currently resides at Delpro where the Delta Valley & Southern line intersects the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) line. The locomotive is still actively used by the railroad and is their only locomotive. As a result, its current setting still reflects Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50's period of significance while it was in operation by the Delta Valley & Southern Railway.

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### SUMMARY

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering as an excellent example of a General Electric 50-ton diesel-electric switch locomotive. The General Electric center cab diesel-electric switch locomotive, like the 50-ton model, was an important switch engine design that was used not only throughout the United States, but in several foreign countries as well. Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the role of railroad transportation in the history of Arkansas's development.

### ELABORATION

Although 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.<sup>1</sup>

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, they 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

From the 1830s onward, steam locomotives were the standard workhorses on American railroads. The earliest locomotives were usually custom, one-off designs and it was not until the 1850s that locomotive builders progressed beyond the experimental stage of locomotive design and construction to the employment

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

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> West, p. 55.

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of standard designs that were developed to meet the various conditions that railroads faced. By the late nineteenth century, as trains became longer and heavier and the increased demand for railroad traffic brought about faster and tighter schedules, American steam locomotives became much larger and more sophisticated. The larger locomotives also brought about a change in manufacturing as well with a shift from small workshops manufacturing locomotives to large industrial factories.<sup>4</sup>

Even though larger scale locomotives were built as time progressed, there was still a need for smaller steam locomotives designed specifically for switching duties in yards. Switchers were usually built to conventional designs, but were relatively small, operated at slow speeds, and had high adhesion in order to move long strings of railroad cars.<sup>5</sup>

However, by the 1930s and early 1940s many railroads began to upgrade their motive power by purchasing diesel locomotives. Many American railroads began using diesel-powered locomotives on their lines during the period since they presented several advantages over steam locomotives. Diesel locomotives are able to start a heavy train from a standstill more quickly than can a steam locomotive. Additionally, diesel locomotives are ready to work at any time, and spend much less time out of service for service and repairs than do steam locomotives. They can also travel greater distances without stopping for fuel. The many advantages of diesel power would have been appealing to many railroads.

The diesel engine was patented in Augsburg, Germany, in 1892 and was the invention of Dr. Rudolf Diesel. Although the first one built ran on coal, the second one ran on refined oil, and as early as 1893 Diesel wrote about the possible applications of his engine to railroad locomotives. The first experimental diesel locomotive was produced in 1909 while Diesel was working with the firm of Klose and Sulzar and by 1913 an experimental diesel-electric railcar appeared in Sweden.<sup>6</sup>

In the United States, General Electric began experimenting with diesel-electric motive power in the early 1910s and had produced five experimental diesel-electric switch engines early during World War I. However, they did not have any impact on the type of locomotives that American railroads purchased. As a result, General Electric decided to focus their efforts on building the electrical components for diesel locomotives while letting other companies build the engines and bodies.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Colin Garratt & Max Wade-Matthews. *Illustrated Book of Steam and Rail*. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2002, pp. 24-25 and 28-31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon Chappell. *Steam Over Scranton: The Locomotives of Steamtown Special History Study*. National Park Service, 1991, found at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/steamtown/shs.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/steamtown/shs.htm).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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The development of a lightweight diesel engine capable of producing lots of horsepower did not occur, however, until the 1930s. In 1930, General Motors, which mainly manufactured automobiles, acquired the Winton Engine Company, a company that specialized in lightweight diesel engines, and the Electro-Motive Corporation, which had been created in 1922 to design and market gas-electric railcars. The merger of these three companies signified the beginning of the era of lightweight streamlined passenger trains, such as the Burlington and Quincy Railroad's *Pioneer Zephyr*, and the beginning of serious use of diesel-electric motive power for passenger trains.<sup>8</sup>

The growth of the Electro-Motive Division (EMD) of General Motors in the 1930s caused General Electric (GE) to rethink its abandonment of diesel locomotive development. As a result, in 1940, GE and Alco teamed up to produce and market diesel-electric locomotives for long-haul road work, and they also worked together on locomotive designs. Although World War II and the War Production Board severely curtailed diesel locomotive design and production in order to conserve crucial materials, such as copper, which is a large component in electrical systems, the Alco-GE partnership introduced several new models after the war.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Alco-GE partnership helped both companies, they were never able to topple EMD as the top diesel locomotive manufacturer, and consistently held the second-place position. The reasons for the company remaining in second place were attributed to Alco's steam-era business practices and higher maintenance costs and reliability problems with the locomotives. Due to the problems, GE terminated their partnership with Alco in 1953, although GE continued to provide Alco (and other manufacturers) with electrical gear for its diesel-electric locomotives.<sup>10</sup>

Even though GE had teamed up with Alco to produce and market locomotives for long-haul road work, GE had produced its own line of switchers and, in fact, it was GE's original diesel locomotive market. In 1940, GE introduced new standard models of switch engines, including a 50-ton center-cab model. (The 44-ton model, which became one of the most popular GE models, was specifically designed to comply with 1930s legislation that allowed one-man operation of locomotives weighing less than 45 tons. Locomotives weighing more than 45 tons required both an engineer and fireman.) Even though several other manufacturers produced center-cab switchers, GE's were the most popular.<sup>11</sup>

The GE 50-ton switcher was popular with a wide variety of railroads for many purposes. Large Class I railroads, such as the Pennsylvania Railroad and Union Pacific, used them for switching on light branch lines

<sup>8</sup> Brian Hollingsworth and Arthur Cook. *The Great Book of Trains*. New York: Salamander Books, Ltd., 1987, p. 272.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Solomon. *GE Locomotives: 110 Years of General Electric Motive Power*. St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing Company, 2003, pp. 52-53 and 55.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 56-57.

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and in industrial areas where heavier locomotives could damage the track and bridges. Shortline railroads also found them to be popular to replace aging steam locomotives. Electric interurban railroads also used the GE center-cab models to handle their freight operations, and they were also popular with industrial railroads and private companies.<sup>12</sup>

The popularity and great features of the entire line of GE switching locomotives was touted in the 1947 *Locomotive Cyclopedia of American Practice*, which wrote:

G-E Diesel-Electric Locomotives for Industrial Use  
Built in Standard Sizes  
For Low Cost and Quick Delivery

For economical industrial switching, General Electric offers a line of standard locomotives for industrial use. Salient features are service-proved design and construction, low first cost, and quick delivery. Special locomotives are available to meet unusual requirements. ...

[With respect to the 45-ton model, which is virtually identical to the 50-ton model] its equalized swivel-truck construction and low weight per axle reduce track damage and minimize danger of derailment, even when the locomotive is operating on maximum-radius curves of 50 feet.

Further advantages of this profit-producing unit are two heavy-duty railway-type traction motors, side rod construction (for starting heavy loads with minimum slippage), and excellent visibility (for fast, accurate switching).<sup>13</sup>

The popularity of the GE center-cab switchers spread beyond the United States, and several units (especially 44-ton models) were sold to railroads outside of the U.S. International purchasers included the Admin. De F.C. del Estado AFE (Uruguay), Bhakra Dam Project (India), Central Alto Cedro (Cuba), Central Rio Haina (Dominican Republic), Ferrocarriles de Yucatan (Mexico), Greater Winnipeg Water District (Canada), and the Stora Kopparberg (Sweden). Before production of the 44-ton model ended in December 1956, a total of 348 had been produced.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Solomon, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Roy V. Wright (ed.) *1947 Locomotive Cyclopedia of American Practice*. New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing Corporation, 1947, Sec. 16, p. 1052.

<sup>14</sup> Information on GE 44-ton locomotives found at: [http://www.thedieselshop.us/GE\\_44Ton.html](http://www.thedieselshop.us/GE_44Ton.html).

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The line that is today the Delta Valley & Southern Railway was built in 1887 to service the timber industry in northeastern Arkansas, and it eventually became part of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway.<sup>15</sup> According to Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, "After hunting and trapping, the principal occupation of the early pioneers was chopping and selling cord-wood to the steamboats. The advent of the little stern-wheel steamboat, 'Orleans,' in the winter of 1812, sailing from Pittsburg [sic.] to New Orleans, was the herald of the Anglo-Saxon population to Arkansas." Even by the late 1880s, it was reported that "Mississippi County has an immense wealth of timber awaiting the advent of capital and labor to put it in the markets of the world."<sup>16</sup>

The Delta Valley & Southern was incorporated on June 27, 1934, with the purpose of purchasing the branch line from Delpro to Tyronza, a total of 18.1 miles. On March 17, 1947, however, the line was cut back to its present size of two miles, extending from Delpro to Evadale. The main traffic hauled on the railroad currently is farm related commodities and manufactured goods, and the railroad handles about 600 cars of goods per year.<sup>17</sup>

Initially, the Delta Valley & Southern used steam locomotives for its motive power. Little is known about the locomotives the railroad had before #50, except that one locomotive, #73, was a 2-6-0 configuration steam locomotive.<sup>18</sup> However, by the 1950s, as with many railroads, the Delta Valley & Southern decided to convert to diesel power. The railroad purchased Locomotive #50, a General Electric 50-ton switch locomotive. The locomotive was General Electric construction #32129. The GE center-cab design was ideal for the railroad, given the relatively small amount of freight that it hauled. Since its construction in 1954, Delta Valley & Southern Locomotive #50 has remained in constant service on the line, and continues to serve the railroad's needs today.

Today, Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is a living reminder of Arkansas's rich railroad history. Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is an excellent example of a General Electric 50-ton diesel-electric switch locomotive in Arkansas. The survival and continued preservation of Locomotive #50 is a monument to the dedication of the Delta Valley & Southern Railway.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion C** for its engineering as an excellent example of a

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, Edward A. *American Shortline Railway Guide*. Milwaukee, WI: Kalmbach Publishing, 1996, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889, pp. 451 and 461.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, p. 102.

<sup>18</sup> Information on Delta Valley & Southern found at: <http://www.taplines/net/greenepa/cat616.htm>.

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General Electric 50-ton diesel-electric switch locomotive. The General Electric center cab diesel-electric switch locomotive, like the 50-ton model, was an important switch engine design that was used not only throughout the United States, but in several foreign countries as well. Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50 is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the role of railroad transportation in the history of Arkansas's development.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Information on GE 44-ton locomotives found at: [http://www.thedieselshop.us/GE\\_44Ton.html](http://www.thedieselshop.us/GE_44Ton.html).

Lewis, Edward A. *American Shortline Railway Guide*. Milwaukee, WI: Kalmbach Publishing, 1996.

Solomon, Brian. *GE Locomotives: 110 Years of General Electric Motive Power*. St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing Company, 2003.

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

From the northwest corner of the U.S. 61 and Delta Valley & Southern Railway line, proceed along the northern edge of the line for 660 feet to the point of beginning. From the point of beginning, proceed southwesterly along the line for 80 feet, thence proceed northwesterly perpendicular to the line for 60 feet, thence proceed northeasterly parallel to the line for 80 feet, thence proceed southeasterly perpendicular to the line for 60 feet to the point of beginning.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encompasses all of the property that contains Delta Valley & Southern Railway Locomotive #50.



GENERAL  ELECTRIC

DIESEL-ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE

CLASS B-B-100/100-2GE733 300 HP

NO.  DATE

ERIE, PA. MADE IN U.S.A.



