



HISTORIC SITE FORM

UTAH STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

(8-22)

1 IDENTIFICATION

Name of Property: **Springdale Irrigation Remnants**

Address: Various linear resources and locations

Twtnshp: 41 S Range: 10 W Sections: 5, 28, 29, 32 & 33

City, County: Springdale, Washington Co., Utah 84767

Lat/Long(degrees decimal): Various linear resources

Current Owner Name: Town of Springdale et al

USGS Map Name & Date: Springdale East, UT 2017

Current Owner Address: PO Box 187, Springdale, UT 84767

Tax Number: Various parcels

Legal Description (include acreage): VARIOUS LINEAR & SPOT LOCATIONS (See Maps 1-5)

2 STATUS/USE

Property Category

☐ building(s)

☒ structure

☐ site

☐ object

Evaluation

☒ eligible/contributing

☐ ineligible/non-contributing

☐ out-of-period

Use

Original Use: Irrigation & Flood Control

Current Use: Irrigation & Flood Control

3 DOCUMENTATION

Photos: Dates

☒ digital: 2024

☐ prints:

☒ historic: circa 1920-2016

Research Sources (check all sources consulted, whether useful or not)

☒ abstract of title

☐ tax card & photo

☐ building permit

☐ sewer permit

☐ Sanborn Maps

☐ obituary index

☒ city directories/gazetteers

☒ census records

☐ biographical encyclopedias

☒ newspapers

☒ city/county histories

☒ personal interviews

☒ USHS Research Center

☒ USHPO Preservation Files

☐ USHPO Architects File

☒ genealogy websites/libraries

☒ local library: Washington Co.

☐ university library(ies):

Drawings and Plans

☐ measured floor plans

☒ site aerial/sketch map

☐ Historic American Bldg. Survey

☐ original plans available at:

☐ other:

Bibliographical References (books, articles, interviews, etc.)

Attach copies of all research notes, title searches, obituaries, and so forth.

Alder, Douglas D. and Karl F. Brooks. *A History of Washington County: From Isolation to Destination*. Salt Lake City, Utah:

Utah State Historical Society and Washington County Commission, 1996.

Broschinsky, Korral. *Springdale, Washington County, Utah: Selective Reconnaissance Level Survey Final Report*, August 2016.

Crawford, Nancy. *How It Happened: A Sketch of Springdale and Zion Canyon*. Unpublished TMs,

Crawford, Nancy C. and Merwin G. Fairbanks. *A Pioneer History of Zion Canyon and Springdale to 1947*. Spanish Fork, Utah: J-Mart Publishing Co., 1972.

Daily Spectrum, *The*, and *The Dixie Falcon*. St. George, Utah. Various issues.

J.L. (Jasper Louis) Crawford Interview for the Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon Oral History Project. Transcript 2004

Larsen, Andrew Karl. *Irrigation and Agriculture in Washington County*. Unpublished TMs, 1950.

Savage, Iona Ruesch. *History of Springdale, Utah*. Unpublished TMs, [1985].

The Town of Springdale Stormwater Master Plan, May 2021. Prepared by Sunrise Engineering, Washington, Utah.

Town of Springdale Culinary Water Master Plan 2023. Prepared by Sunrise Engineering, Washington County, Utah.

Utah Historic Quarterly. Various issues.

Washington County Daughters of Utah Pioneers. *Under Dixie Sun: A History of Washington County By Those Who Loved Their Forebears*. Panguitch, Utah: Garfield County News, 1950.

Washington County News. St. George, Utah. Various issues.

Zion Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Published in 2011.

Researcher/Organization: Preservation Documentation Resource/prepared for Town of Springdale

Date: August 2024

Building Style/Type: Structures: Canals, Ditches, Washes, Channels, Gutters, Basins, etc. *No. Stories:*

Foundation Material: N/A *Wall Material(s):* Dirt, Sandstone, Concrete

Additions: none ☒ *minor* major (describe below) *Alterations:* none minor ☒ *major (describe below)*

Number of associated outbuildings *and/or structures*

Briefly describe the principal building, additions or alterations and their dates, and associated outbuildings and structures. Use continuation sheets as necessary.

Introduction

A selective Reconnaissance Level Survey (RLS) of Springdale conducted in 2016 identified the remnants of the Springdale irrigation system as a significant historic resource. The system consists of mostly linear resources with a few single structures. This Intensive Level Survey (ILS) is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the potentially eligible resources. Many are located on public and private lands that were not accessible within the scope of this survey. In addition, fieldwork and research for this ILS revealed that many of the natural resources, such as springs and washes, were utilized and adapted by Springdale's residents for irrigation/flood control and should also be considered historic resources in the context of Springdale's history.

This ILS has two primary objectives. The first is to adapt the historic periods outlined in the 2016 RLS to provide context as resources are identified and evaluated. Located at the entrance to Zion National Park, Springdale is currently experiencing development pressures as it continues its 100-plus-year transformation from an agricultural outpost to a resort destination. The contextual periods from the 2016 RLS were prepared based on the historic buildings identified in the survey. There are far fewer identified historic irrigation and flood control resources; and the original construction and subsequent alteration dates of the resources are more difficult to determine. In most cases, the contextual periods from the 2016 survey have been combined, to simplify the process.

The second objective uses representatives of various resources as examples of how to identify and evaluate similar resources in the future. Each new public or private construction project has the potential to identify historic remnants of Springdale important irrigation and flood control system. Not every resource can be saved, but if they can be identified, some may be incorporated into plans for development; or if not, can be documented as resources that contributed to the history of Springdale. It is important to note that many remnants of the Springdale irrigation system were historically associated with resources within the current boundary of Zion National Park. A few resources are in areas where Zion National Park and the Town of Springdale share jurisdiction [Map #1].

Early Springdale Settlement Period, 1862-1898

Springdale Development & Zion Canyon Exploration Period, 1898-1918

These two contextual periods have been combined because the locations of historic resources and the materials and workmanship used will have similar characteristics. These characteristics include a variety of construction methods from earthworks to dry or mortared rubble stone masonry. Many examples have concrete upgrades from later historic periods.

Within a few years of the first settlement in 1862, Springdale was a string of loosely associated farmsteads along the canyon road parallel to the North Fork of the Virgin River, which flowed from Zion Canyon [Photographs 1 & 2]. During the early settlement years, most of the early irrigation canals and ditches were built for agricultural fields between the canyon road and the river to the east [Map #2]. The best preserved examples are found on the homesteads that were eventually sold to an expanding Zion National Park. A well-documented example is the Flanigan Ditch, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1997 [Figure 1]. The Flanigan Ditch was constructed about 1880 by the Flanigan family and modified for continuous agricultural use until 1960. One-fifth of the length of the ditch (currently filled or buried) is located outside the park and has yet to be documented.

In 1984, Zion National Park conducted a survey of NRHP eligible structures within its boundaries for a Multiple Property Submission. Among the structures documented were three canals: Crawford/Gifford Canal (built 1890s), Pine Creek Canal (built 1890s), and Oak Creek Canal (built 1935) [Figure 2]. All three were listed on the NRHP in 1986, although the documentation is not as fully developed as the 1997 listing of the Flanigan Ditch.

Mostly located outside of Zion National Park boundaries was the Springdale Irrigation Canal, which was built in the first settlement years, but grew more sophisticated after Springdale Irrigation Company was organized in 1907 (later called the Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company). The majority of remnants of the irrigation system within the current boundaries of Springdale were most likely connected to the Springdale Irrigation Canal's diversion from the North Fork of the Virgin River. The remnants can be categorized in four ways: 1) the town ditches that flanked Springdale's Main Street (now Zion Park Boulevard); 2) the ditches above the farms along the west side of Main Street; 3) straight ditches along property lines that connected the east side fields to the river; and 4) private ditches that brought water to individual homes [Map #2].

In 2022, the Town of Springdale excavated a section of the Springdale Canal that had been filled and buried for many years at the north end of town [Photograph 3, Map #3]. The canal was partially an earthen structure with section of rubble retaining walls [Photograph 4]. A stone marker installed in 2024 at approximately 620 Zion Park Boulevard will commemorate the structure. The red sandstone rubble and rough mortar suggests this was part of the settlement-era irrigation system [Photographs 5 & 6]. By the turn of the twentieth century, the town of Springdale had grown into a line village running north and south of an elbow bend in Main Street where a combination school and church meetinghouse was located. Because the town was constrained by the foot hills to the west and the river to the east. The irrigation ditches on either side of Main Street were important for both irrigation and flood control [Figure 3, Map #4]. Historic photographs show that these "town ditches" were wide enough to be considered part of the canal system. They were constructed of a combination of earthworks, stone walls and linings, with simple wood bridges to individual properties [Figure 4].

An example of a west side ditch for a private property can be seen near 1100 Zion Park Boulevard [Photographs 7 & 8]. This ditch is earth and stone ditch was partially in the rear of one of the oldest houses in Springdale (recently demolished). A similar filled-in ditch is located at about 1500 Zion Park Boulevard [Photograph 11, Map #5]. This ditch is connected to a stone-lined channel or flume (with a missing sluice?) that sent water down to the street level ditch [Photographs 9 & 12]. The stone structure shows evidence of later concrete modifications at the top, probably dating from the 1930s [Photograph 10]. One nineteenth-century home near the commercial district at 785 Zion Park Boulevard appears to have an secondary stone ditch parallel to the filled-in town ditch [Photograph 13]. A small rubble wall at approximately 501 Zion Park Boulevard may be a remnant of a private ditch perpendicular to the east side town ditch [Photograph 14].

Springdale, Zion National Park & the CCC, 1919-1942

The designation of Zion National Park in 1919 began one of the most consequential period in Springdale's history, particularly during the depression years with a number of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) projects in the park and the surrounding towns. The red sandstone masonry of this period is distinctive for its precision as local masons became more skilled working on projects within Zion National Park, especially during the construction of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and Tunnel between 1927 and 1930. Masonry skills used to build the bridges, culverts, and retaining walls for the highway were used to upgrade the irrigation system in Zion and Springdale, mostly built by the CCC Camp NP-2. In most cases, this work can be distinguished from the settlement-era stone work by its use of random or course ashlar blocks and finer mortar joints, as found in utilitarian projects such as irrigation ditches.

The Oak Creek Canal, built in 1935, was designed to provide a naturalistic water source for campgrounds near the south entrance to the park [Figure 5]. In the mid-1930s, the CCC camps in Zion National Park worked on a project to upgrade the irrigation ditches in Springdale. The stone channels made it easier to keep the town ditches clear from sediment and debris. Partial remnants of the stone work can be seen at the bend in the road near the center of town [Figures 6 & 7; Photographs 15-18]. Some sections remain the original width [Figure 9].

As the town transitioned to culinary water pipes, the modified ditches on either side of Springdale's Main Street continued to function as flood control and for private property irrigation [Figure 8]. North and south of the town center, stone gutters fed the water into storm drains and natural washes [Figures 10 11 & 12; Photographs 19-20]. Managing the water flow in the natural washes has been an important tool for both irrigation and flood control. There are eight washes on the west side of the North Fork of the Virgin Rivers and four on the east side [Map #2].¹ A handful of open and piped culverts connect the washes as water flows under Zion Park Boulevard (a.k.a. Springdale's Main Street, State Route 9, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway).

¹ *The Town of Springdale Stormwater Master Plan*, May 2021. Prepared by Sunrise Engineering, Washington, Utah: p. 5-6.

Springdale at the Entrance & Rising Tourism, 1942-1958**Springdale Incorporation and Economic Development Period, 1959-1979**

These two periods combined span a period of increased development in Springdale as the agricultural town became a tourist destination. As more small farms were transformed into auto courts and motels in the 1940s and 1950s, with larger hotels in the 1960s and 1970s, the use of irrigation for agriculture slowly decreased. Although water rights were still important to stakeholders and the Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company continued to manage the canals and ditches; however, some were filled-in and others were partially lined with concrete. Individual property owners began filling portions of the town ditches in the front of their property, both as a safety issue and to facilitate the movement of automobiles in and out of the properties. During this period, many of the east side ditches running straight to the river were also filled as family farmsteads were divided and developed.

The lower end of the Springdale Wash (or the Big Wash as it was known historically) in the center of town was lined with concrete, a dramatic transformation that aided the most flood prone area of town [Figure 13; Photographs 21-22]. The Springdale “Big” Wash remains in a mostly natural state above the Jolley-Gifford Cemetery [Photograph 24]. A water treatment plant was built on the hillside near the Blacks Canyon Wash [Photograph 23]. Smaller washes, such as the Gifford Lane, Claret Cup, and Serendipity Washes, did not change, even as they were incorporated into new motel development. Most were adapted with larger pipes and concrete culverts to control water under Zion Park Boulevard and into the North Fork of the Virgin River [Photographs 27-28 & 30].

Springdale Resort Community, 1980-2024

The ending date has been extended from 2016 as used in the survey. As visitation to Zion National Park has steadily increased in the past forty years, and particularly in the past decade, many of the remnants of the Springdale’s historic irrigation system fell victim to expediency. Overcrowding in parking areas of Zion National Park led the National Park Service to implement a shuttle policy in 2002. In 2017 and 2018, the Utah Department of Transportation completed a major project that eliminated most of the town ditches on either side of Zion Park Boulevard.² The project included improved shuttle stops, wider sidewalks in the town center, new sidewalks from the city boundaries to Zion National Park, a bike lane, and improved storm drainage.

An example of large hotel properties incorporating water resources into the landscape, are the newer hotels along Canyon Springs Road. Starting at Zion Park Boulevard, the Canyon Springs Wash was recently lined with concrete with landscaping on either side [Photograph 25]. Further into the property, the Canyon Springs Wash features more natural earthen walls [Photograph 26]. A recent project completed in 2024, included a stone retaining wall, storm water inlets, and a large pipe to drain unnamed minor wash at approximately 1650 Zion Park Boulevard [Photograph 29]. Springdale Pond is also located near where the Canyon Springs Wash meets the North Fork of the Virgin River.

In the past three decades, the Town of Springdale has invested in recreational water resources for residents and tourists. The George Barker River Park, established in 1998, is the best place for the public to walk along the North Fork of the Virgin River. A bridge provides access to a dog park and trails on the east side of the river [Photograph 31]. Historically, the residents of Springdale knew their storm water was headed to the Virgin River. Today, storm water grates gently remind visitors that each is a “Drainage to Waterway” [Photograph 32]. In 2022, workers at Zion National Park excavated a long-buried irrigation canal in the Watchman Campground [Figure 14]. Two years later, the Town of Springdale excavated another canal [Photographs 3-6] with plans to commemorate the spot with a marker, similar to the one at the bend of Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale’s historic Main Street [Photograph 15].

² Similar stone-lined irrigation ditches are mostly intact in the town of Rockville, one mile west of Springdale on State Route 9.

Architect/Builder: Various Springdale Residents & CCC Camp NP-2 Date of Construction: 1862 - 1941

Historic Themes: Mark themes related to this property.

(see instructions for details)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Economics	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics/
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Government
<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Social History
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> Maritime History	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> & Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts	

Write a chronological history of the property, focusing primarily on the original or principal owners & significant events. Explain and justify any themes marked above.

The remnants of the historic Springdale irrigation system are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture within a period of significance between 1862 and 1941. The remnants may also be contributing within the themes of Community Planning & Development and Entertainment/Recreation for associations with the development of Springdale as a gateway to Zion National Park. Under Criterion C, a few structures may be eligible in the area of Engineering; however, it is unclear if these structures have enough integrity to make a case for Engineering significance. It is recommended that the Town of Springdale produce a Multiple Property Documentation form to provide context for its historic resources, including both buildings and structures that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A few of the examples noted in the above section have a historic home and ditch remnants on the same property that could be jointly listed on the National Register. The contextual periods below have been adapted from the 2016 survey to focus primarily on the use of water in Springdale.

Pre-Settlement Period

Native Paiutes occupied Zion Canyon when the first Mormon settler, Nephi Johnson, explored the upper Virgin River in 1858. The nomadic Paiutes generally avoided the deep shadows of the canyon. However, the Paiutes utilized water from the Virgin River for limited agriculture at the mouth of the canyon and are believed to be the first people to dig ditches for irrigation in the area. Historians have suggested that the earliest irrigation ditches constructed by the Mormon settlers near the mouth of the canyon were modified Paiute ditches. More research is needed to determine if any physical evidence remains of the Paiute irrigation system.

Early Springdale Settlement Period, 1862-1898

The first permanent settlers of Springdale arrived in 1862. Isaac Behunin gave the name Zion to the canyon where he built a log cabin. Albert Petty, Joseph Black, William Heap, and John Rolf were the first settlers who came to Springdale within a year. The Springdale town site was surveyed in 1863. The name was taken from the abundance springs on the Petty homestead. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church) in the area were organized as the Springdale Branch of the Rockville Ward in 1864. Many of the early settlers of Springdale in the 1860s relocated from Shunesburg on the East Fork of the Virgin River after repeated flooding threatened the community. The higher ground of Springdale also experienced flooding but to a lesser extent.³ When Brigham Young visited the area in 1870, he declared "This is not Zion" reportedly a nod to the harsh conditions the settlers were experiencing. In 1872, Major John Wesley Powell and his party surveyed Zion Canyon and recorded the canyon's Paiute name, Mukuntuweap.

³ Shunesburg (also called Shonesburg) is now a ghost town and the location of a large commercial orchard.

Between the 1860s and 1900, the population of Springdale tripled from 50 to 144. Most of the early residents got their water from the river where they would “fasten a barrel to a sled and hitching a horse to the sled, haul water to the house.”⁴ In the beginning, each homesteader dug their own irrigation ditches, but by the 1870s, the residents worked co-operatively on projects such as irrigation, road and bridge building, and pasturing livestock. With one exception, all of the major canals/ditches were built during this period: Flanigan Ditch, Crawford Ditch, Pine Creek Canal, and the Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company Ditch.⁵

J. L. Crawford remembered that his family was lucky to have a spring on their property for drinking water. However, he also remembered how difficult it was to maintain the “cotton-picking” ditches. Brush dams had to be rebuilt after each flood and it “took up half our time keeping water in that darn ditch.”⁶ Flooding was a common occurrence during the rainy season. On July 14, 1896, Springdale resident, Lora A. Christensen described the flooding: “The water in the big wash was so high that it overflowed its banks and reached the bottom of the windows in the church house. Water was everywhere. We could do nothing but sit in our houses and watch our property being washed away.”⁷ Floods in 1906, 1909, and 1915 destroyed or damaged bridges that spanned the Big Wash. At other times, the area was so dry that there was no water in the ditches. One newspaper article from July 1897 reported that “Harvest is now in vogue at Springdale, Utah. The ground at that place, we are told, is dry, dry.”⁸

Springdale Development & Zion Canyon Exploration Period, 1898-1918

Around the turn of the twentieth century, there were dramatic changes to the Springdale community. John J. Ruesch established the first general store in Springdale. The local sawmill produced boards, shingles, and other wood products. As building materials were obtained more easily, the residents of Springdale began to build more substantial frame houses. Rooms were added to the church/school building in 1905 and 1909. The string of loosely associated farmsteads began to look like a town.

The splendor of Zion Canyon brought visitors through Springdale in wagons and early automobiles. Leo A. Snow, a U.S. deputy surveyor based in St. George, surveyed Zion Canyon as part of this work in southern Utah. In 1909, Snow’s report to the Secretary of the Interior resulted in President William Howard Taft designating the Mukuntuweap National Monument in Zion Canyon. That same year, the Utah State Road Commission was organized and funds were made available to convert old wagon roads to automobile use. Elmer Stout drove the first automobile into Springdale in 1915. The first automobile road was constructed into the canyon two years later.

In the summer of 1917, the Wylie-Way Camp opened for tourists in Zion Canyon. The canyon was heavily promoted as “Utah’s Wonderland.” The camp provided employment for many Springdale residents and a market for its farm produce. That year the acting National Park Service (NPS) director, Horace Albright, visited the canyon. Albright hired a local man, Walter Ruesch, as caretaker. Grazing in the canyon was halted and wagon access to some park roads was restricted. With a fairly stable economy boosted by the nascent tourism industry, Springdale became a thriving hamlet with attractive frame houses and barns. Promotional brochures featured photographs of Springdale with Zion Canyon in the background. The population reached 186 in 1910 and 204 in 1920. In 1918, Horace Albright changed the park’s name to Zion National Monument, believing that the unfamiliar Indian name would deter visitors.

With only modest growth in population, the irrigation system was mostly maintained, rather than expanded, during this period. Maintenance work on the ditches was a year-long job. An example from Springdale was reported in a February 1913 newspaper article: “We had fine rain Saturday night. The water has been out of our town ditch ever since the heavy freezing began. Work will begin on clearing the ditch in the morning. We will appreciate the water in town.”⁹ A rudimentary system of piped culinary water was implemented in the town during this period, but irrigation remained the primary source of water for both household and commercial agriculture.

⁴ Nancy C. Crawford and Merwin G. Fairbanks, *A Pioneer History of Zion Canyon and Springdale to 1947*, (Spanish Fork, Utah: J-Mart Publishing Co., 1972): 36.

⁵ The terms canal and ditch appear interchangeable. Early newspapers used the term ditch more often. There are references to a Phantom Ditch, but no other documentation was found.

⁶ J.L. (Jasper Louis) Crawford Interview for the Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon Oral History Project. Transcript 2004: p. 14, 77.

⁷ *Pioneer History of Springdale*: p. 39.

⁸ *Union*, July 3, 1897: 3.

⁹ *Washington County News*, February 2, 1913: 5.

Springdale, Zion National Park & the CCC, 1919-1942

On November 19, 1919, the U.S. Congress officially established Zion National Park. The Kolob Canyon area was designated a separate Zion National Monument in 1937. It was later incorporated into the park in 1956. Between 1919 and the start of World War II, Springdale experienced its greatest changes, mostly due to a flurry of improvements to the park, which increased the number of both visitors and workers to the area.

The Utah Gazetteers provide a glimpse of the transition from agricultural outpost to tourist town. Between 1900 and 1918, less than ten businesses are listed for Springdale. With the exception of M. E. Gifford, who specialized in axe handles, all were common occupations and businesses of the period: carpenters, mason, blacksmith, cooper, wagon maker, grist mill, and general store. After the designation of the national park, Springdale's economy became more diverse.

In 1921, Freeborn Gifford, who had been operating a soda fountain, started an ice cream stand. John A. Allred established a restaurant in the same year. The Union Pacific Railroad took over the Wylie Camp in 1923 and made a number of improvements under its subsidiary, Utah Parks Company. In the 1920s, the Springdale directory listing included the National Park Transportation and Camp Company, which promoted the "Grand Loop" park experience, featuring bus tours of Zion, Bryce Canyon, and the Grand Canyon.

Between 1923 and 1924, visitation to Zion National Park doubled to 8,400 annually. The first lodge in the park was built in 1925. The park's most expensive improvement project was the construction of the Zion Tunnel, a 1.1-mile long tunnel cut through solid sandstone between 1927 and 1930. The influx of tunnel workers and support personnel was one of the reasons the population of Springdale had jumped to 351 by 1930. Visitation at the park multiplied yearly until the Great Depression when it leveled off at about 55,000 per year. A number of civic improvements took place in Springdale in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1924, a new water system was installed. The road through Springdale was straightened and a new bridge was built in the center of town in 1926. The road was paved in 1923.

On November 17, 1929, the Springdale church-school burned down. The fire necessitated two large building projects. Students were bussed to Rockville until a new school was built in 1930. The LDS Chapel was mostly completed by 1932. Commercial dairies were established by Dan Crawford and William Gifford. A number of small restaurants were operated during this period. Grandma's Kitchen was a popular café and beer joint. John Allred operated a dance hall behind his store in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1938, noted photographer, Dorothea Lange, visited Springdale and took photographs of the peach harvest.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established in 1933 to employed young men during the depression years. One of the earliest camps was built in Zion National Park. In 1934, a second CCC camp was established in the area. Along with a number of projects in the park, the town's benefited from a number of CCC and Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs. These included bridges and flood control, stone-lined irrigation ditches, and scenic turnouts along the main road. One of the best examples of the masonry skills acquired by the CCC and WPA workers was the Springdale Town Jail. The Springdale area CCC camps operated for nine years. The 1940 census of 454 persons in Springdale includes a large number of men associated with the CCC camps.

Even without regular flooding, Springdale's water system could present hazards. In 1926, ten-year-old Reta Ruesch "fell while swinging on the water-pipe which spans the big wash at the meeting house, injuring her wrist."¹⁰ The year 1941 was particularly difficult. In October 1941, two-year-old Helene DeMille fell into the irrigation ditch in front of her house. Her body was found about an hour later lodged in the water wheel at the west end of town.¹¹ Two weeks later, a second two-year-old, Morris Ruesch, drowned in the town ditch.¹² Zion National Park expanded a number of times during this period, notably purchasing the Crawford homestead, including the Crawford Ditch in the 1931. J.L. Crawford noted that the family got electricity and piped water only a few years before they sold the farmstead to the government.¹³

¹⁰ *Washington County News*, October 14, 1926: 5.

¹¹ *Washington County News*, October 16, 1941: 1.

¹² *Washington County News*, October 30, 1941: 1.

¹³ *Crawford Interview*, p. 2.

Springdale at the Entrance & Rising Tourism, 1942-1958

With the closing of the CCC camps in 1942, most of the workers went on to serve their country in World War II. The population of Springdale dipped to 175 in 1950, but that was only the permanent residents. As Springdale transformed into a full-scale tourist town, the seasonal rise in tourism-based population was both a blessing and a curse. As roads improved, agricultural products could be transported from outside the area and the local agricultural economy declined, putting a greater burden on the tourism industry to provide steady employment. Springdale residents became adept at balancing a family farm, running a tourist camp or restaurant in season, and other cottage industries.

After World War II, with a dramatic increase in individual automobile ownership, Zion National Park and Springdale adapted from organized tour groups to the family vacationers. The popularity of the tourist cabin camp waned and the motel increased in popularity. A directory of the city published in 1958 lists six motels: the Driftwood Lodge, the Eagle's Nest, Zion Park Motel, Zion Rest Motel, and the Zionville Motel. Driftwood and Zionville featured associated restaurants. Springdale business owners began promoting the town as the "Entrance to Zion National Park" and selling postcards and other souvenirs. The population of Springdale rose to 248 in 1960. As Springdale's Main Street became more commercial, newer houses were built at the quieter ends of town or on the side streets. In 1958, Springdale was described as a "little one-street row of houses crowded between the Virgin River and the hills."¹⁴

During this period, the east and west town ditches were utilized primarily for household landscaping/gardens and storm runoff. The school was a special case where the PTA worked to remove most of the rocks and put lawn in front of the school. However the school property was higher than the ditch and it was impossible to keep water in it during the summer. Eventually, a "water wheel was put in the ditch and the water run across the wash by means of a flume."¹⁵ In 1955, possibly anticipated the expansion of Zion National Park in 1956, the three main ditches, Crawford, Flanigan, and Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company, were diverted to new points along the North Fork of the Virgin River. Two years later, the Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company Ditch was diverted a second time to provide better coverage to its 218.3 acres of irrigated land.¹⁶

Springdale Incorporation and Economic Development Period, 1959-1979

In 1959, the Town of Springdale was incorporated as a municipality. Visitation to Zion National Park continued to increase exponentially, particular in 1964 when the section of Interstate 15 to St. George was completed. The population decreased in 1970 to 172, but there was an increase in tourist-based businesses. More motels were established, three out of four notably using the term lodge rather than motel, as a nod to the national park: El Rio Lodge, Pioneer Lodge, and Terrace Brook Lodge, and Canyon Ranch Motel. Two new restaurants and a drive-in were in business in the 1960s and 1970s. There were also two campgrounds, including a Bob's Campground Market catering to tourists. The town had service stations representing most of the major companies: Phillips' 66, Texaco, Union, etc. During this period, a number of souvenir gift shops were incorporated into motels or built as separate businesses. Examples include Eagle's Nest Gift Shop, Bumbleberry/Grandma's Kitchen, Indian Village, and Little Eagle Curio Shoppe. Adventure Expeditions opened for the more adventurous visitors. Historic aerial photographs show that portions of the town ditches were filled during this period, particularly in the commercial district with the development of more tourist-oriented properties.

In 1960, after nearly a century of agricultural use, the Flanigan family sold their homestead and ditch to the National Park Service. A decline in commercial agriculture made maintenance of the ditches increasingly difficult. The *Washington County News* noted that "If the farmers in this [Springdale and Rockville] vicinity had to keep up three canals and should there come a bad summer raining season, it would be more than they could do without help. Most of the farmers and land owners hereabouts are on the retired list or about to be and could not do the hard work that would be required."¹⁷ Despite the decline, work continued to be done, for example in 1968: "There is work being done on the Springdale canal going through the old Hyrum Justet place and fixing the road up to the cemetery."¹⁸

¹⁴ *Utah Historical Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, July 1959: 212.

¹⁵ *Pioneer History*, p. 52.

¹⁶ *Washington County News*, July 28, 1957: 3 and May 9, 1957: 3.

¹⁷ *Washington County News*, December 9, 1965: 3.

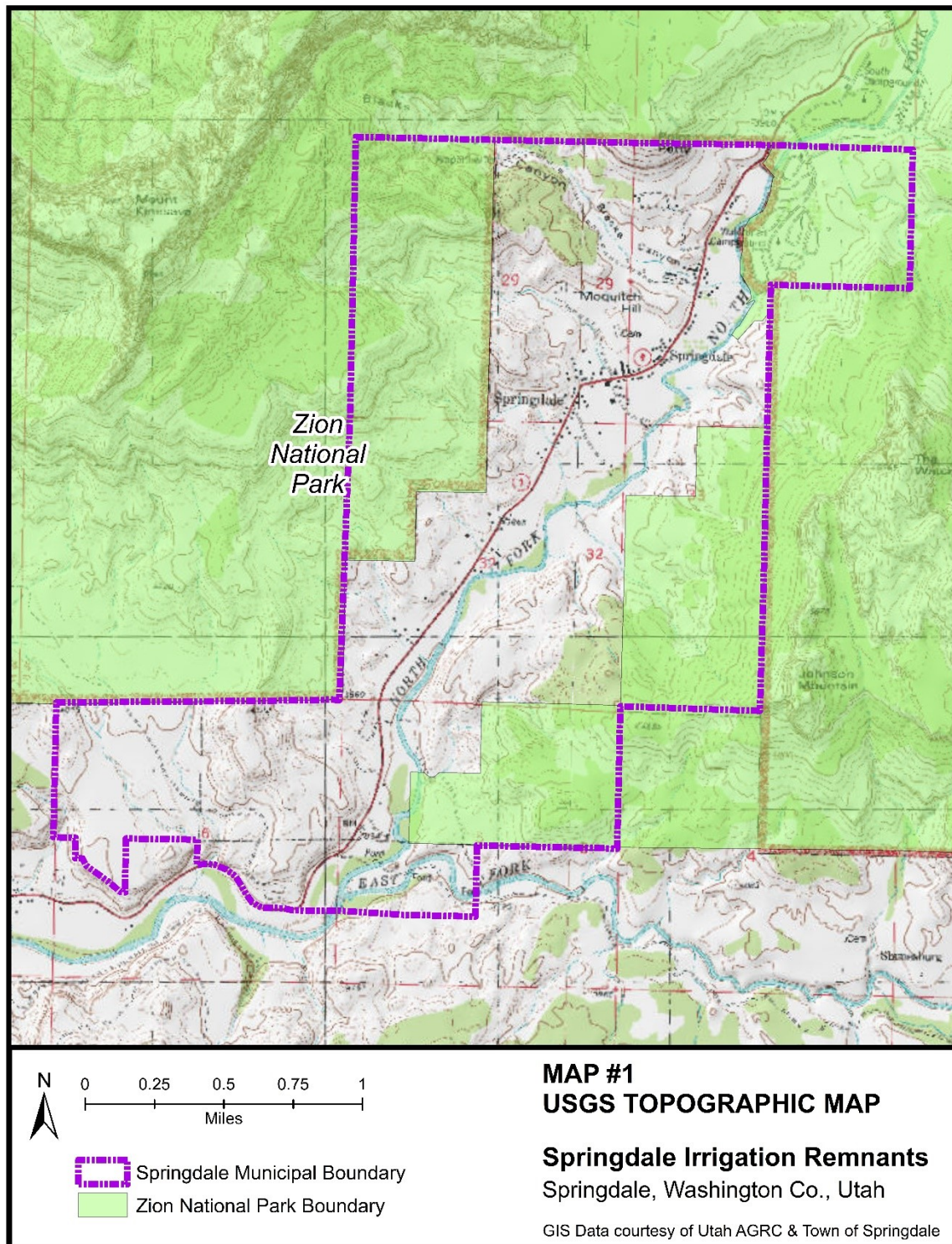
¹⁸ *Washington County News*, February 2, 1968: 4.

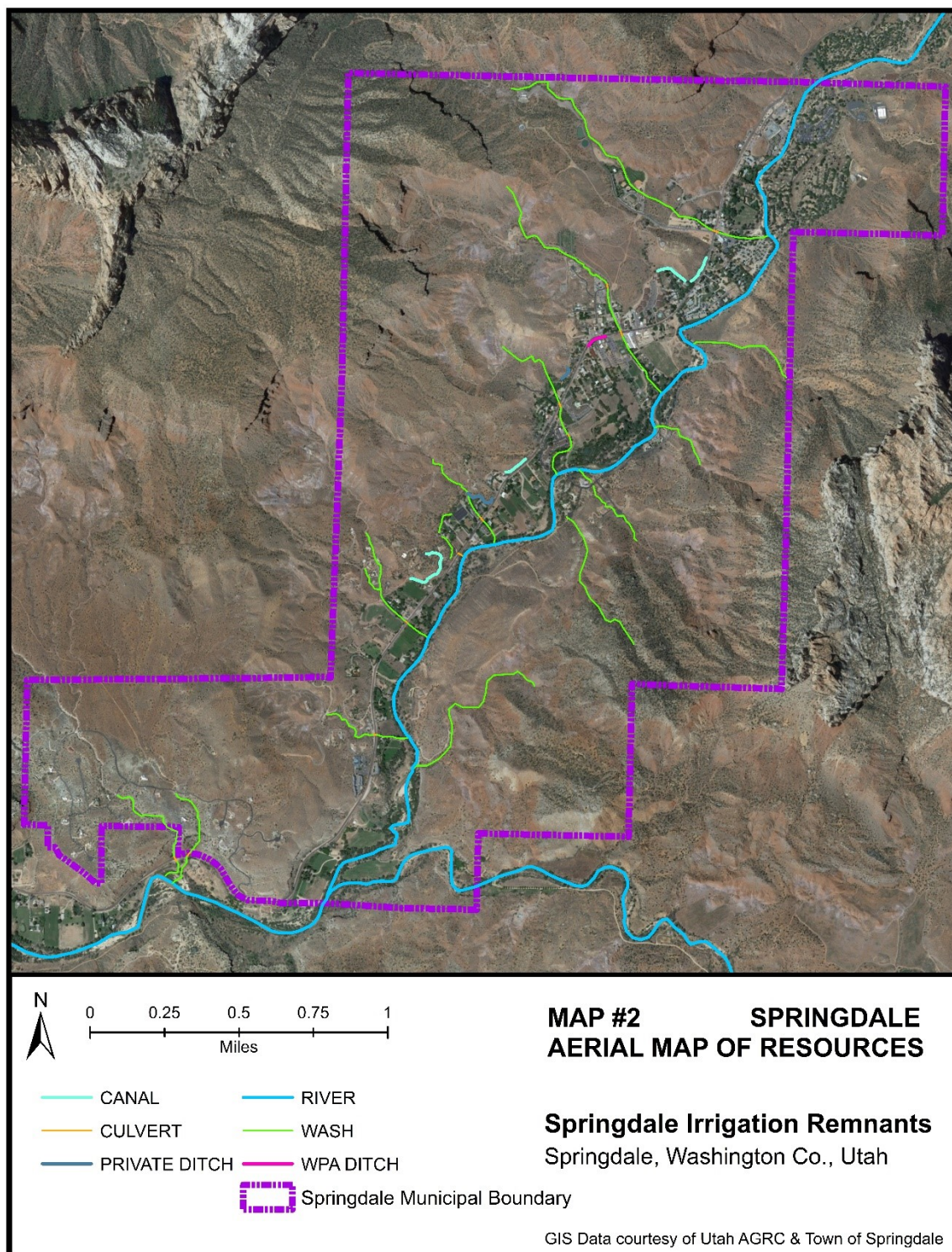
Springdale Resort Community, 1980-present

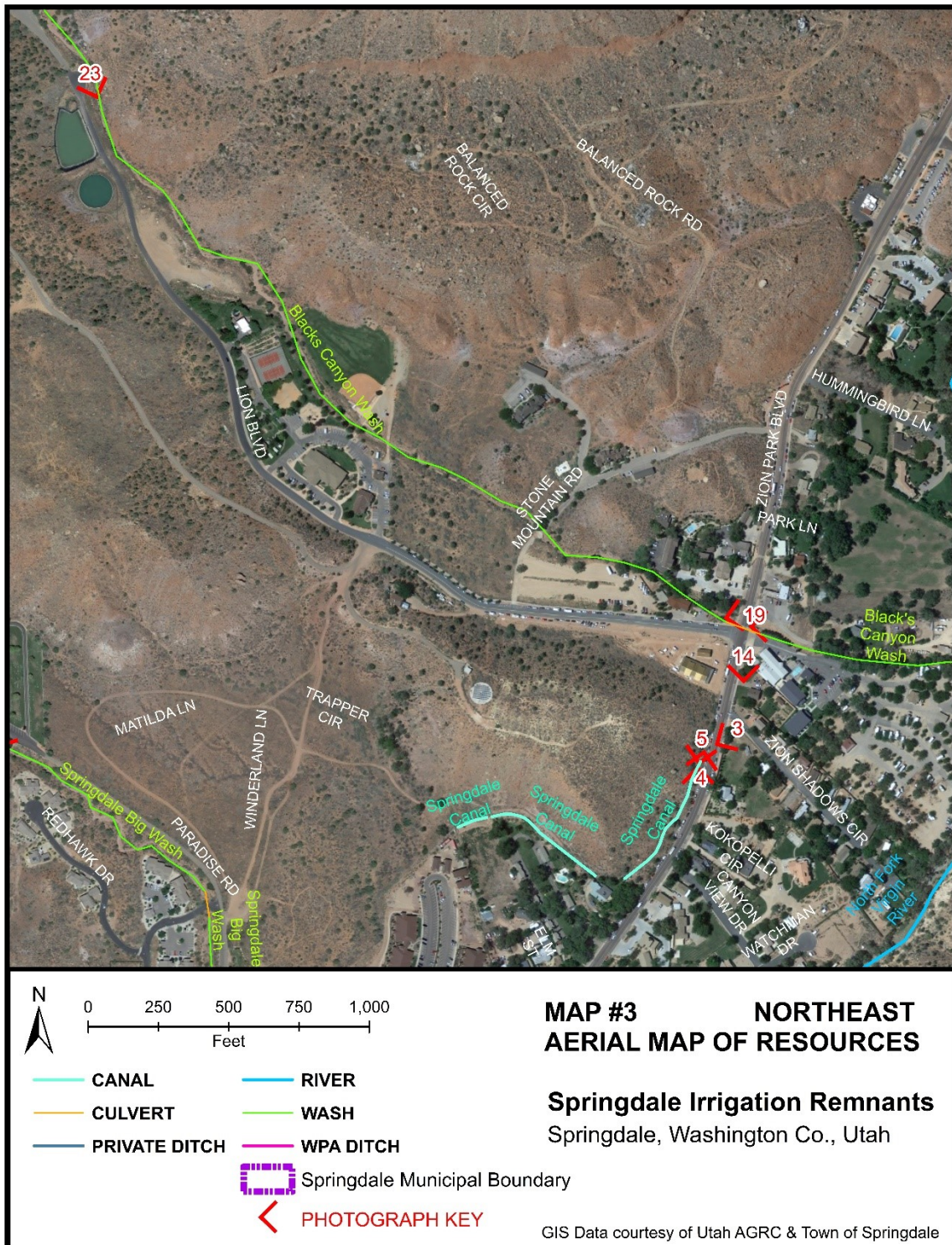
For decades, Springdale remained a small town with tourism taking an ever-increasing chunk of the economic base. Beginning in the 1980s, the tourist began to transform from a tourist town to a tourist resort. The population has steadily increased from 275 in 1990, to 475 in 2000, to 529 in 2010, leveling out to 519 in 2020. Projections predict increases in the foreseeable future. One factor has been the tremendous increase in annual visitors to Zion National Park. When the number of annual visitors topped three million in the 1990s, park officials instituted a shuttle system of propane-powered buses in 2000. From early April to late October, the scenic drive in Zion Canyon is mostly closed to private vehicles. Shuttle service was extended along Springdale's Main Street (now called Zion Park Boulevard) to bring visitors from area motels. Major improvements on Main Street, completed in 2018, included addressing the parking issues caused by the Zion shuttle system in Springdale during peak season. A number of historic homes in the center of town have been converted to restaurants and gift shops. A few have been demolished for new hotel developments. Springdale has the feel of a resort community with nearly as many art galleries as curio shops.

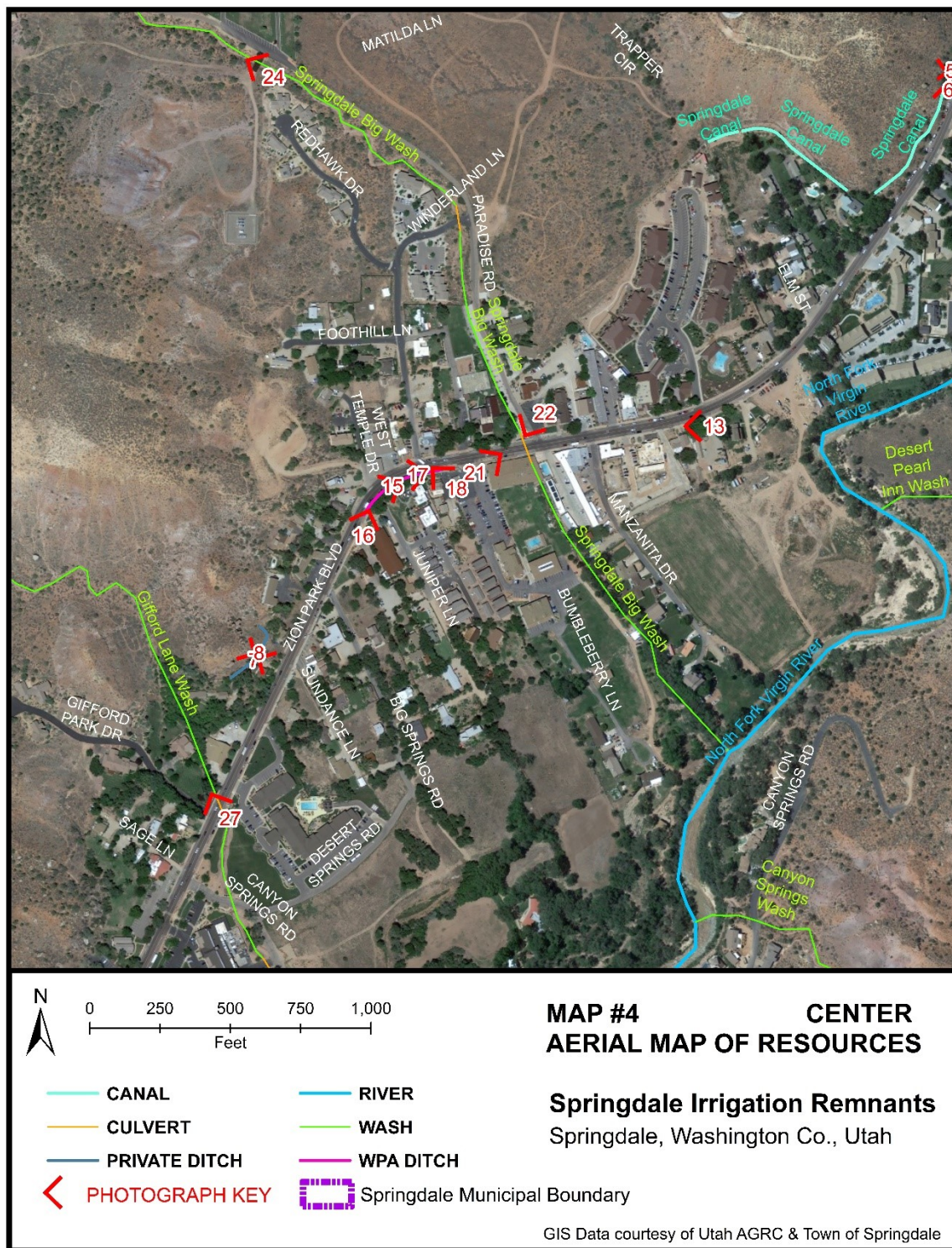
The first major effort to enhance safety by installing sidewalks along Main Street occurred in 1983 as a joint effort between the town and the state road department. With the expansion of the sidewalks in 2018, the character of Springdale has been impacted by the loss of the stone-lined ditches; however, there is a sense that Zion Park Boulevard is now safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

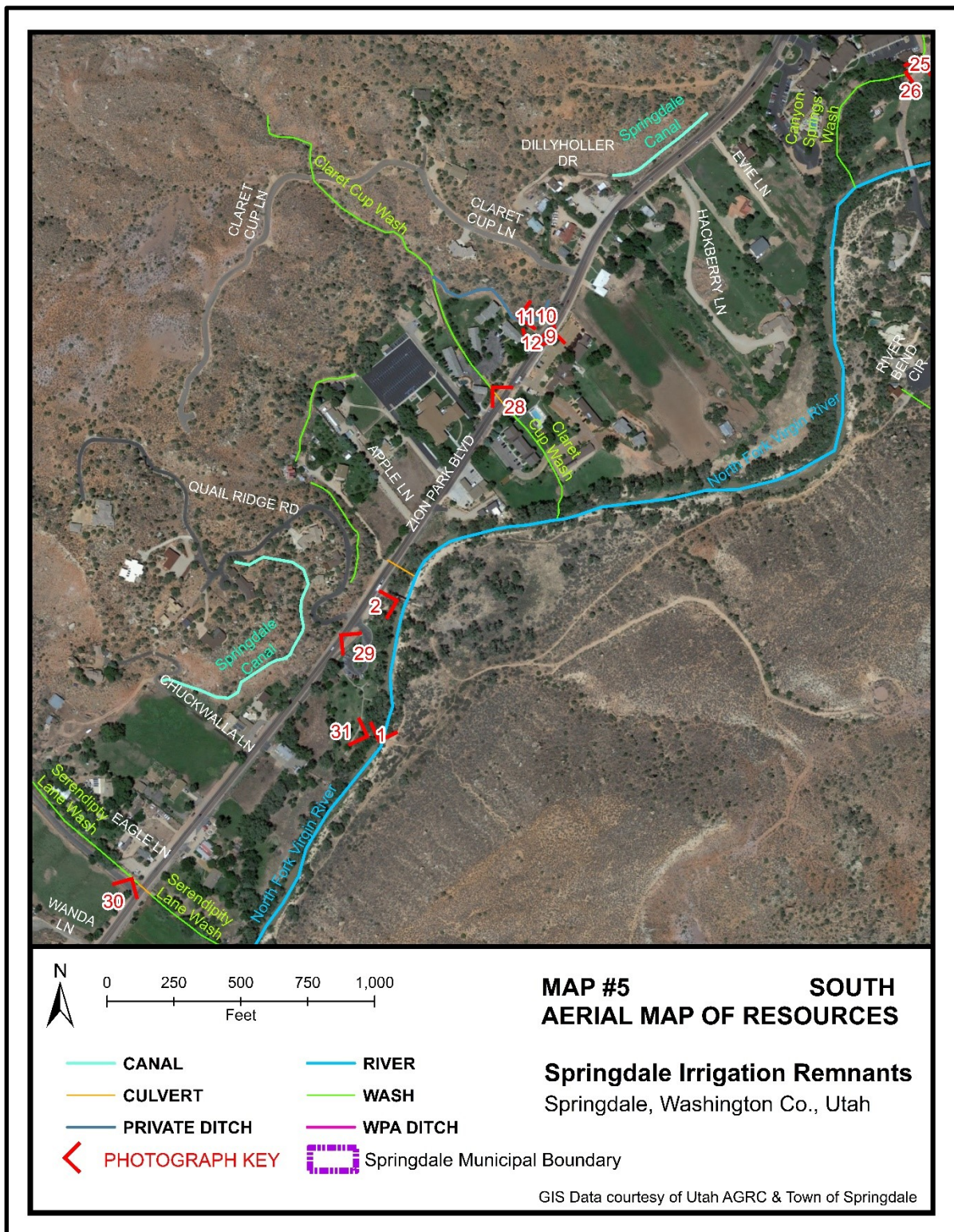
The historic irrigation system is still used by many property owners, but the number of filled-in ditches has increased. In the early 1980s, the Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company began replacing many open ditches with concrete irrigation pipes to mitigate high seepage losses and hillside erosion. The company worked with Zion National Park to install a pressurized irrigation water system in the late 1980s. The town owns approximately two-thirds of the current irrigation system and the SCIC owns the remaining one-third. The excavation of the ditch at the north end of town in 2023-2024 was a rare project to reverse the disappearance of the irrigation system in Springdale.













Photograph 1

View of the North Fork of the Virgin River from George Barker River Park. Camera facing south.



Photograph 2

Bridge with pipes just north of George Barker River Park. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 3

View of irrigation ditch remnant along Zion Park Boulevard with marker base. Camera facing southwest.



Photograph 4

View of unearthed irrigation canal about 620 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing north.



Photograph 5

Pioneer stone wall remnant along ditch at about 620 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing south.



Photograph 6

Detail of pioneer stone wall along canal. Camera facing north.



Photograph 7

Remnants of pioneer irrigation ditch at rear of properties at about 1100 Zion Park Boulevard.
Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 8

Remnants of pioneer irrigation ditch at rear of properties at about 1100 Zion Park Boulevard.
Camera facing southwest.



Photograph 9

Sluice from irrigation ditch to street at about 1500 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing north.



Photograph 10

Details of concrete modifications to sandstone structure. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 11

View of filled-in ditch above sluice. Camera facing west.



Photograph 12

Remnant of irrigation ditch near 1504 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing south.



Photograph 13

Remnant of secondary street ditch at 785 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing west.



Photograph 14

Possibly remnant of private ditch at approximately 501 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing south.



Photograph 15

WPA curving ditch (left) near bend at 955 Zion Park Boulevard, marker stand (right). Camera facing east.



Photograph 16

WPA ditch (now filled-in) near bend at about 985 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing north.



Photograph 17

WPA ditch (now filled-in) with new storm drain and curb at about 925 Zion Park Boulevard.
Camera facing east.



Photograph 18

WPA ditch (filled-in) detail of old and recent stonework with storm drains at about 925 Zion Park Boulevard.
Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 19

Blacks Canyon Wash with stone retaining wall. Camera facing west.



Photograph 20

Blacks Canyon Wash, concrete culvert. Camera facing west.



Photograph 21

Springdale "Big" Wash, view with former LDS Church meetinghouse in background. Camera facing east.



Photograph 22

Springdale "Big" Wash, concrete details. Camera facing southwest.



Photograph 23

View of Blacks Canyon Wash with retaining wall above water treatment plant. Camera facing south.



Photograph 24

View of Springdale "Big" Wash from bridge to trailhead near Jolley-Gifford Cemetery.
Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 25

Canyon Springs Wash, recent concrete lining. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 26

Canyon Springs Wash, natural earthen walls. Camera facing west.



Photograph 27

Gifford Lane Wash at approximately 1150 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 28

Claret Cup Wash at approximately 1540 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 29

Recent storm water inlets and pipe to drain unnamed minor wash at approximately 1650 Zion Park Boulevard.
Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 30

View of Serendipity Lane Wash at about 1900 Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 31

View of bridge over North Fork of the Virgin River, entrance to dog park and trailhead from George Barker Park. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 32

Detail of "Drainage to Waterway" storm water grate on south Zion Park Boulevard. Camera facing southeast.



FIGURE 1

Flanigan Ditch, Zion National Park
Washington County, Utah

1997 NRHP photograph
courtesy Utah State Historic Preservation Office



FIGURE 2

Crawford Irrigation Canal, Zion National Park
Washington County, Utah

1984 NRHP photograph
courtesy Utah State Historic Preservation Office

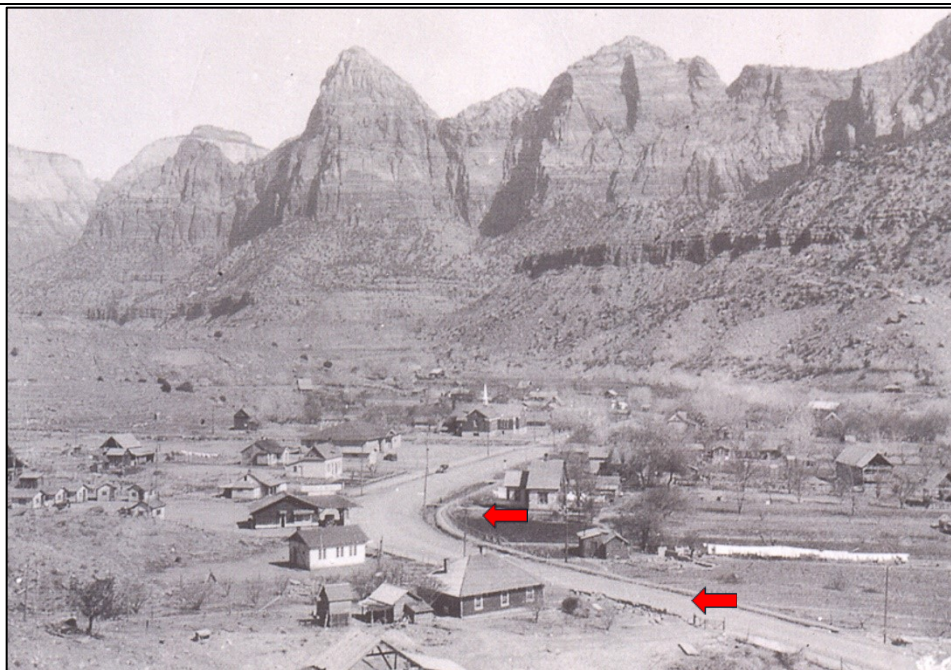


FIGURE 3

Springdale Main Street, Irrigation Ditches at Bend in the Road
Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa 1940 photograph
courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 4

Springdale Main Street, detail of west side ditch
Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa 1925 photograph
courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 5

Oak Creek Canal water drops being viewed by park ranger
Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa 1936 photograph
published in *The Daily Spectrum*, April 15, 1989

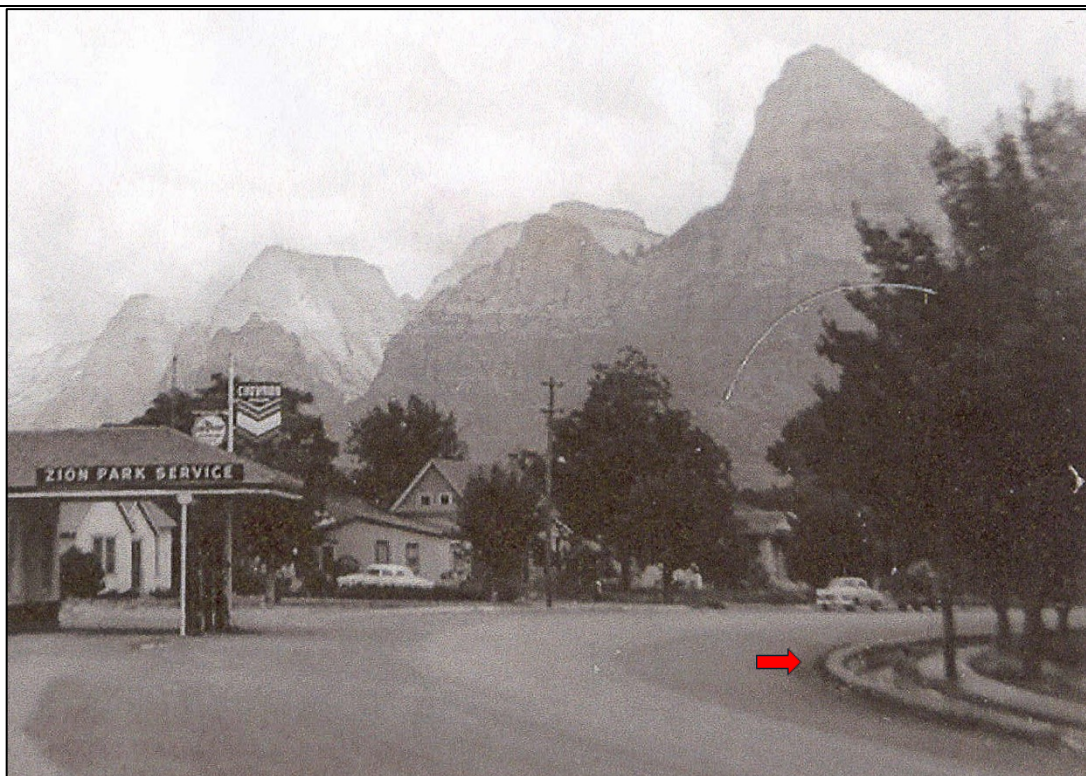


FIGURE 6

Springdale Main Street, east side curved WPA ditches at the bend
Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa 1950 photograph
courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 7

Springdale Main Street, filled WPA ditches at the bend
Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa **2009** photograph
courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 8

WPA ditch in commercial business district
about 859 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Washington County, Utah

circa **1940** photograph
courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 9

Child dipping toes in east side Main Street ditch
about 895 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Utah

circa 1955 photograph
Courtesy Town of Springdale



FIGURE 10

WPA ditch on west side of Main Street
about 730 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Utah

2016 photograph
Springdale Selective Reconnaissance Survey



FIGURE 11

WPA ditch on east side of Main Street
about 465 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Utah

2016 photograph
Springdale Selective Reconnaissance Survey



FIGURE 12

WPA ditch on west side of Main Street
about 1067 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Utah

2016 photograph
Springdale Selective Reconnaissance Survey



FIGURE 13

Springdale “Big” Wash, lined with concrete
about 880 Zion Park Boulevard, Springdale, Utah

2016 photograph
Springdale Selective Reconnaissance Survey



FIGURE 12

Settlement-era ditch unearthed in Zion National Park
Watchman Campground

2022 photograph
Courtesy *The St. George News*