

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: **Albion River Bridge**
Other names/site number: Caltrans number: 10.0136
Name of related multiple property listing:



Historic Highway Bridges of California MPS 2004

2. Location

Street & number: Mile Markers 43.7 thru 44.0 on California Highway 1
City or town: Albion State: CA County: Mendocino
Not for Publication: Vicinity:

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 forth 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<hr/> Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

<hr/> Signature of commenting official:	
<hr/> Date	
<hr/> Title :	<hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- 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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation - road-related (vehicular) - Bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation – road-related (vehicular) - Bridge

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Timber, Steel, and Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Albion River Bridge, built in 1943, is 969 feet long, spanning 150 feet above the Albion River Valley, at the Pacific Ocean, in Mendocino County, along Northern California's Coastal Highway 1. It is a rare example of a timber deck over combination steel and timber truss bridge. It is the only surviving bridge of its type in the California state highway system. It was constructed during WW II, when strategic material shortages required innovative engineering design. The superstructure is a 28 foot wide, asphalt surfaced, timber roadway, sided with a massive painted timber wheelstop rail system that cantilevers 2 feet on each side of a timber truss below. Part of the substructure is a 130 foot salvaged steel truss on 2 steel reinforced concrete piers. The remaining parts of the substructure are 2 continuous 15 foot deep timber trusses on 11 timber trestle bents on concrete foundations. The bridge has been in continuous service for the past 73 years. With its historic integrity entirely intact, the Albion River Bridge stands today, exactly as it was built.

Narrative Description

The original bridge over the Albion River was a low timber draw bridge. It served as an important element of the "Old Coast Wagon Road" established by Mendocino County along this section of the northern California coastline. During the late nineteenth century, most traffic to and from coastal towns and sawmills was by steamship or from inland rail connections. The drawbridge location routed the minimal coastal traffic through the center of the sawmill operations of the Albion Lumber Company, the first

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mill to be built on the Northern California coast (1852) It was built by William A. Richardson, the first American to settle in California (1823).

As the amount of wagon and ultimately motorized traffic increased along the coast beyond the capacity of the small draw bridge, a new route was established. An elevated timber trestle bridge was designed and built by Mendocino County in 1922, It was located one half mile up river thus avoiding the disruption caused by the increased traffic in the center of the mill operations. This new location also soon became inadequate to accommodate the ever increasing commercial and industrial traffic along Highway One.

The meandering access roadways to the old bridge and its narrow roadbed required that the Highway Department consider complete replacement rather than major structural alterations. Since all lumber company operations had ceased in 1934, the former mill location was abandoned. A new route, directly across the valley, at the mouth of the river, was established and a new design was prepared in accord with Department of Highways' continuing commitment to the dictates of the "City Beautiful" movement of the early 20th century.

This movement, promoted by Charles Mulford Robinson emphasized that *"a bridge is so conspicuous and monumental a structure that we should not be satisfied merely with durability and strength, but should demand that these be added: fitness, grace, and beauty."* In accord with this movement, the Division of Highways eliminated truss designs for all but exceptionally long span bridges. This commitment to more beautiful designs included a program of new and replacement bridges along California's scenic costal Highway 1. Timber and steel truss bridge design was set aside and replaced by steel reinforced, poured in place, concrete beams and arches. Concrete was much more readily available in California and the decreased maintenance cost was an attractive consideration, especially along the coast. A premiere example of this effort is the National Register listed Bixby Creek Bridge (1932) at Big Sur, in Monterey County.

In Mendocino County, two beautiful concrete arch bridges were built to replace the deteriorated timber trestle bridges at Jug Handle Creek (1938) and Russian Gulch (1940). These bridges are less than 10 miles north of Albion on Highway 1. When the war began, in 1941, the new bridge for Albion was still on the drawing board, and all new bridge work was restricted to "major" California roads. Highway 1 at Albion did not qualify. However, after major lobbying efforts by coastal businesses, governments, and residents, the design work was finally authorized to continue on the project to replace the dangerous, deteriorating timber deck over timber truss bridge at Albion, and eliminating its 1 mile of dangerous, meandering access roadways.

Initially, 2 giant concrete arches were designed to span the 1,000 foot wide valley at the mouth of the river. However, the amount of concrete and steel required for this design was not considered appropriate by the newly established War Production Board (WPB) and could not be approved. **The bridge had to be redesigned.** The Division of

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Highways design engineers accommodated the severe restrictions imposed by the WPB, and the final revised design was approved in 1942 by C.H. Purcell, Director of the California Department of Public Works.

The amount of concrete was limited to foundations, abutments, and only 2 of the 13 bent piers. A steel truss was salvaged from an abandoned Swayne Lumber Company railroad bridge over the south fork of the Feather River near Oroville, 120 miles east of Albion. It was shipped to the Shrader Iron Works of San Francisco and refabricated into a 15 foot deep Pratt truss. This truss was installed onto 135' tall, poured-in-place concrete piers each side of the 130 foot wide river crossing section of the bridge. The remaining trusses are treated timber supported on treated timber trestle type bent piers of various heights on concrete foundations. Salvaged railroad rails were split and used to reinforce the new concrete elements of the bridge, in lieu of standard reinforcing steel.

Redwood, then restricted, was not available for the timber elements of the structure. Consequently, the revised design substituted a relatively new product: pressure treated Douglas Fir produced by the Wauna Lumber Company in Wauna, Oregon. They shipped 829,000 board feet of treated timber to Albion. This wood preservation process along with an excellent maintenance program are considered to be the major contributing factors in extending the life of this bridge beyond its estimated 20 years by more than 50 additional years - so far. According to Caltrans' most recent inspection report (2014) the bridge is still in excellent condition.

Construction began in 1943. The bridge was built by the Fred J. Maurer and Son Construction Company of Eureka, California, at a cost of \$ 370,000.00. T.H. Horn was the resident engineer. The Albion River Bridge was dedicated on June 11, 1944.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation

Period of Significance

Criteria A: 1943 thru 1945 - Material restrictions of the War Production Board.

Criteria C: 1943 – Date of construction

Significant Dates

1943 - Construction begins

1944 – Dedication

1976- Alternate Route considerations by Caltrans

2009 - Demolition plan proposed by Caltrans

2013 – Schedule for replacement presented by Caltrans

2016 – Coastal Commission Permit issued for Partial Seismic Upgrade and Pavement Replacement

Significant Person

William A. Richardson (1795-1856), First American to settle in California

First owner of the property occupied by The Albion River Bridge

C.H. Purcell, Director of the Department of Public Works (1928-1951)

Approved the final design of the Albion River Bridge in 1942.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Engineer/Builder:

Engineer: G.T. McCoy, State Highway Engineer

Resident Engineer: J.H. Horn

Builder: Fred J. Maurer and Son, Eureka, California

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Albion River Bridge was constructed in 1943-4 as an essential link in California's Coastal Highway 1. It is a timber deck over steel and timber truss bridge. It is the last surviving example of this type of transportation engineering innovation in California. It was designed by engineers at the California Department of Transportation and built by the Fred J. Maurer and Son Construction Company of Eureka, California, within the tenants of severe wartime restrictions. It is a rare "deck over truss" type bridge constructed of concrete, reinforced with salvaged railroad rails, treated Douglas Fir timber and a salvaged steel railroad bridge truss. Reinforced concrete abutments anchor each end of the 969 foot long structure. The concrete pad foundations are placed on timber and precast concrete piles. Two concrete towers support a 130 foot long steel truss, 150 feet above the Albion River. North and south roadway elements are supported by 11 massive timber bent trestles. These timber bent trestles are 19 feet wide and support a timber truss that spans the 38 feet between bents. The truss supports a superstructure composed of a 2 inch asphalt roadbed laid on 2 opposing diagonal layers of 3x12 timber planks on 17 continuous 6x20 inch stringers. The 28 foot wide roadway cantilevers from the structure below by 2 feet on each side and supports a painted timber wheelstop/guardrail. This rail has 8x8 posts exactly 76 inches on center, aligning precisely with major elements of the substructure. These rail posts are the major visual element of the Albion River Bridge experience. The bridge has never been altered and stands now exactly as it was built 73 years ago.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criteria A: Wartime Accommodation

The Albion River Bridge is an historic example of engineering ingenuity in response to the severe priority material restrictions during WWII. The tremendous amount of concrete and steel required to build what had become conventional bridge design in the late 1930's was not available. To complete the project, the engineers had to revert to the timber trestle bent designs of the past. They also included the newly patented process of pressure treating timber to keep it from rotting and igniting. The bridge was originally designed to last 15-20 years. However, with the excellent maintenance program and the unexpected durability of the pressure treated timber, over 50 years of additional use has been provided - so far. Just as the 1943 U.S. steel penny is a familiar, lasting, tangible example of the Federal Government's response to critical

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wartime shortages, the 1943 Albion River Bridge is a tribute to California's efforts to accomodate severe wartime restrictions

Criteria C: Distinct Characteristics of Type

The Albion River Bridge is the only remaining timber deck superstructure over steel and timber truss on concrete and timber bent trestle substructure bridge in the California highway system. This rare example of transportation engineering history can still be experienced today exactly as it was built, 73 years ago. It was constructed during WWII, 25 years after its primary structural design elements of steel and timber were set aside by the Department of Transportation in favor of reinforced concrete beams and arches. It is a lasting tribute to the ingenuity and talents of the engineers and contractors who built it, and an important link in the history of bridge design in the State of California. Crossing this bridge along California's scenic coastal Highway 1 is a most thrilling experience. East and West vistas are enhanced by the steady tempo of her timber rail enriching this delightful visual symphony that is the Albion River Bridge.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Walsh, E.L., Associate Bridge Engineer, *"87 Bridges Replaced, Eliminated or Strengthened on Mendocino Coast Area Highways"* California Highways and Public Works, (September 1939)

Author not listed, *"Highway Commission on Tour in Redwood Empire Dedicates New Albion Bridge"* California Highways and Public Works, (July-August 1944)

Corkhill, Thomas, *The Complete Dictionary of Wood*. New York: Dorset Press, 1989.

California Department of Transportation, *Historic Highway Bridges of California*, Sacramento, California, Caltrans, 1990

Myers, William A., *Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks*, Pacific Gas and Electric, San Francisco, 1977

Robinson, Charles Mulford, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities; or, The Practical Basics of Civic Aesthetics*, New York, The Knickerbocker Press, 1901

Smith, Dwight A., Norman, James B., and Dykman, Pieter T., *Historic Highway Bridges of Oregon*, Portland, Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989

California Department of Public Works, *Final Construction Report*, 1944

California Department of Public Works, *As Built Drawings*, 1944

California Department of Public Works, *Bridge Inspection Report*, 1949

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Astaneh, Abolhassan, PhD, P.E., *Comments on Albion River Bridge 2014 Caltrans Inspection Report*, Berkeley, California, 2015

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: California Department of Transportation Archives, Sacramento

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property <3 Acres (969 feet long x 120 feet wide)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

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Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map): **USGS Map attached**

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 2 Easting: 433,650 Northing: 4,341,950
Equals center of bridge:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Mile Markers 43.7 thru 44.0 on California Highway 1 Mendocino County

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The bridge is 969 feet long and the ROW (right of way) is 120 feet wide.
(116,280 square feet - < 3 acres)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John R. Johansen, Architect

+

organization: John Roger Johansen / Architect (JRJA)
street & number: 33950 Albion River South Side Road, Box 490
city or town; Albion state: California zip code: 95410
e-mail: jrja@mcn.org
telephone 707.937.3487
date: 3 January 2017 (revision of 28 October 2015 revision of February 6, 2015
submission)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. Submitted under separate cover as Additional Documentation **A**.
- **Sketch Map:** Submitted as Additional Documentation **B**.

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Photo Log:

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: October, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
1 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0001
Looking west, from ½ mile up the Albion Ridge Rd.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Caltrans
Date Photographed: August, 1943
Location of original digital files: Caltrans Archive, Sacramento, CA
2 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0002
Looking north, from the south side of the river.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Caltrans
Date Photographed: December, 1943
Location of original digital files: Caltrans Archive, Sacramento, CA
3 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0003
Looking north, from the south side of the river.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Caltrans

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Name of Property

Date Photographed: April, 1944
Location of original digital files: Caltrans Archive, Sacramento, CA
4 of 20: 04_Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0004
Looking west, from the north side of the river, savaged truss fabrication

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Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Caltrans
Date Photographed: April, 1944
Location of original digital files: Caltrans Archive, Sacramento, CA
5 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0005
Looking west, from the north side of the river, salvaged truss in place.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: March, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
6 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0006
Looking north-east from the beach, timber trestles at north end.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: March, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
7 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0007
Looking south, timber trestle base with foundation.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: March, 2015

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Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410

8 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0008

Looking south, from below north end of deck

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge

City or Vicinity: Albion

County: Mendocino

State: California

Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)

Date Photographed: September, 2015

Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410

9 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0009

Looking up, from east side of bridge, between trestle towers.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge

City or Vicinity: Albion

County: Mendocino

State: California

Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)

Date Photographed: September, 2015

Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410

10 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0010

Looking north-west, from riverside residence

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge

City or Vicinity: Albion

County: Mendocino

State: California

Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)

Date Photographed: October, 2015

Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410

11 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0011

Looking north-east, at (seldom seen) west side of bridge.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge

City or Vicinity: Albion

County: Mendocino

State: California

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Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: September, 2014
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
12 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0012
Looking west, at six old friends (ARB and 5 users).

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: October, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
13 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0013
Looking north, from center of Highway 1 at south end

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Caltrans
Date Photographed: June, 1944
Location of original digital files: Caltrans Archive, Sacramento, CA
14 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0014
Looking west, new bridge construction is complete.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: October, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
15 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbionRiverBridge_0015
Looking west, from south side of river

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Dr. Hassan Astaneh, PE

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Date Photographed: July, 2015
Location of original digital files: University of California, Berkeley, CA
16 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0016
Looking west, from north side of river

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: October, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
17 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0017
Looking northeast, south end of west side, showing **76 inch horizontal module**.
The trestles are 3 modules wide and are spaced 6 modules apart.
There is a beautiful order to this engineering masterpiece.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: October, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410
18 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0018
Looking north-east, at north end from beach.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino
State: California
Photographer: Derek Magdalik Photography / Fotomendo
Date Photographed: October, 2013
Location of original digital files: Albion, CA 95410
19 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0019
Looking up at bottom of deck where steel truss meets timber truss – north end.

Name of Property: Albion River Bridge
City or Vicinity: Albion
County: Mendocino

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State: California
Photographer: John Roger Johansen (JRJA)
Date Photographed: January, 2015
Location of original digital files: Box 490, Albion, CA 95410

20 of 20: Ca_MendocinoCounty_AlbianRiverBridge_0020

Model of Albion River Bridge roadbed indicating diagonal deck layers on timber stringers with 76" module guard-rail sections alongside a 1943 steel penny.

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.