

**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: Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge \_\_\_\_\_

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Highway Bridges in California MPS

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: 1819 Las Canoas Road \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: Santa Barbara \_\_\_\_\_ State: California \_\_\_\_\_ County: Santa Barbara

Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites

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1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1 \_\_\_\_\_

structures  
objects  
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation/Road-related=Bridge

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation/Road-related=Bridge

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

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

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

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: \_Walls=Stone\_\_\_\_\_

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge was constructed constructed out of locally quarried sandstone with an ashlar, rectangular cut, closed spandrel arch with a 25-foot span. The spandrel walls were constructed of uncut rubble laid in irregular courses at the recommendation of Supervisor Sam Stanwood that thought the bridge built of rounded stream stones would better harmonize with the environment as it sits between two canyons in the hills of Santa Barbara and at the trail head for Rattlesnake Canyon. Although Rattlesnake Creek has been subject to numerous floods over time, the bridge still stands solidly over the creek.

Since 1919, the bridge's location at the base of the Rattlesnake Canyon hiking trail, a natural setting between two canyons in the hills of Santa Barbara surrounded by native, natural plantings, has not changed. Since the design of the bridge relates directly to its function as a transportation crossing, it is also important that the bridge still accommodates a road situated over the creek and thus the bridge has high integrity of setting, location, feeling and association. The essential features of its design, including the arch, abutments, spandrel wall, parapet railing and piers are intact and it retains integrity of design workmanship and feeling. The historic sandstone materials are present giving the bridge a high integrity of materials. Evidence of the craft of the ashlar cut stone masonry technology remains as seen around the arch of the bridge, thus the bridge has high integrity of

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workmanship. The building has retained a high level of historic integrity so that the building conveys its original 1919 appearance.

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### **Narrative Description**

The Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge is a closed spandrel, masonry arch structure. The closed spandrel arch has a 25-foot span whose interior arch walls have four courses of sandstone that rest between the concrete floor and board-formed concrete interior arch. The locally quarried sandstone is rectangular cut around the arch with a center keystone that is engraved with the construction date "1919" on the South elevation. The cut stone arch is flanked and surrounded by uncut rubble spandrel walls laid in irregular courses with a two rubble parapet railings with four end piers topped with large round stone caps on either side of the asphalt street. The center of the north railing facing the street has a stone plaque built into the wall facing the street that reads "S. J. Stanwood, Supervisor, P. Poole, Builder, O.H. O'Neill, Designer." The Rattlesnake Canyon hiking trail head begins on the north side of the bridge and the bridge is surrounded by natural, native plants and trees. There have been few alterations to the bridge. The stones on the railing have been repaired to match the existing as needed. One of the large stones caps on the south-east pier is missing.

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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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

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Engineering  
Community Planning and Development  
Landscape architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**  
1919  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**  
1919  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**  
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  
O'Neill, Owen Hugh, Engineer  
Poole, Peter, Mason  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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 Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C as a significant example of masonry bridge architecture, at the local level of significance. The bridge was constructed in 1919, the period of significance, with an ashlar, rectangular cut, sandstone arch designed by master engineer, Owen Hugh O'Neill Jr. who designed the majority of the masonry arch bridges built in Santa Barbara County and was also a civic leader in the community. The bridge represents the outstanding attention to design and engineering of Owen Hugh O'Neill. The bridge is a testament of the work of master mason, Peter Poole, whose talent gave the bridge high artistic value and excellent craftsmanship with the unique rectangular cut arch with uncut rubble spandrel walls that blend the bridge into its natural environment. Peter Poole was a local mason who built much of the sandstone infrastructure of Santa Barbara. This was one of Peter Poole's more significant contributions to Santa Barbara's stonework in one of Santa Barbara's most popular hiking and recreation areas. The bridge qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of bridge construction made with high quality local sandstone material popular in Santa Barbara. The property is nominated under cover of the Historic Highway Bridges in California Multiple Property Document as an example of the *Stone Masonry Bridges* property type.

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

The property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion 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.

In the years from 1870 to 1940, when Santa Barbara was quickly evolving into a vibrant, growing city, the period witnessed an extraordinary explosion of stone construction made possible by the abundant supply of sandstone, a cadre of expert masons, and financing by private citizens. This period provided an atmosphere conducive to the building of public and private spaces of all kinds; bridges, walls, gardens, and assortment of other stone work and encouraged some exceptional expressions of the masons' art. Among the most apparent expressions of the beauty in stone that give the region such distinction are the bridges. While serving a functional purpose, they are an artistic expression. Santa Barbara is cut through by a number of creeks and their canyons, which drain from the mountains to the sea. All east-west roads are forced to span these sometimes steep canyons and volatile streams, dry during the summer but occasionally raging torrents in the winter rainy season, these crossing demand seriously engineered bridges. In the early 1900s, as Santa Barbara was developing this important infrastructure, Santa Barbara masons took advantage of the opportunity to display a variety of styles and approaches. In doing so, they created and maintained a high standard for excellence in stonework, one that has lasted over a century.

A Historic Structures/Sites Report completed by Aubrie Morlet of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. in 2015 surveyed the stone bridges of Santa Barbara and stated the following:

Santa Barbara County contains many historic age masonry arch bridges, four of which have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Ham and Hope 2003). Although all four were



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originally constructed in the county, three of these bridges are now located within the City of Santa Barbara's limits: Sycamore Canyon Creek Bridge (1921), Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge (1919) and Mission Creek Bridge (1819). The fourth eligible bridge, Ashley Road Bridge over Montecito Creek (1918), remains outside of the city limits. The Sycamore Canyon Bridge and the Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge were both found eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as they are the only two remaining unmodified masonry arch bridges made of uncut rubble in all of the State of California. The Mission Creek Bridge is eligible as a rare example of masonry arch architecture in Southern California and as the oldest bridge in Santa Barbara County. The Ashley Road Bridge over Montecito Creek is eligible as a rare, unmodified example of the masonry arch architecture in Southern California. The Mission Creek bridge is designated as part of a City Landmark. Both the Mission Creek and Ashley Road bridges are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places under a multiple property documentation titled Historic Highway Bridges of California (Napoli 2004) (Morlet 2015).

Use of masonry for construction in the Santa Barbara area dates back to the time the Spanish arrived. Since it was necessary to travel some distance into the woods to obtain lumber, but rocks were found scattered on the ground, stone became the preferred building material. Stones were cut and incorporated into the original Santa Barbara Mission structures, although most of the early buildings and walls of the mission were made of adobe. In 1811, stone arches were erected the length of the main corridor. After the mission was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1812, thick walls of sandstone were incorporated into the towers (Santa Barbara News-Press 2 March 1975). The tradition of building with stone continued in Santa Barbara County through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This method of construction was often chosen because local brown sandstone was readily available and easily transformed from round or shapeless boulders into symmetrical smooth faced stone for building purposes. A local stonemason explained in July of 1883, "When a quantity of it is wanted, a blast of powder is drilled into the heart of one of the large boulders and exploded and a number of square edged building stones are produced" (Santa Barbara News-Press July 1883). Many residences, walls, bridges, and commercial structures were constructed out of local sandstone during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Immediately after the First World War, Santa Barbara began a concerted effort to revamp its visual image. During this time city planners carefully monitored all construction of any new structure to make sure it was consistent with the master plan that was based on a Hispanic/Mediterranean streetscape mode (Conard and Nelson 1986:14). The use of a traditional building material, sandstone, in

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the construction of the many new bridges and culverts built during this period was in line with Santa Barbara's planning and design efforts (Ham and Hope 2003:11-14.).

The Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge is at the base of Rattlesnake canyon, one of the most popular hiking and recreational areas in Santa Barbara. The Spanish first "developed" the canyon in the early 1800s, evidence of which can still be seen today. The Spanish called it Las Canoas (The Canoas) and in the second half or the 1800s, the canyon came to be called Rattlesnake. It opened a new road connection between Mission Canyon on the west and Sycamore Canyon on the east and also provided access for the city's expansion into Santa Barbara's backcountry. Supervisor Sam Stanwood suggested the bridge be built of rounded stream stones to better harmonize with the environment. Designer O'Neill put a unique signature on the Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge by placing large rounded rocks, in keeping with the bridge's theme on the top of the end posts.

The majority of the masonry arch bridges built in Santa Barbara County were the result of designs by county surveyor Owen Hugh O'Neill, Jr. O'Neill was born on February 8, 1873 in La Graciosa in Santa Barbara County. His father, O.H. O'Neill Sr., was born in Ireland and educated at Trinity College in Dublin, and upon coming to the United States, he found work in a company of engineers. The younger O'Neill spent time in Mexico where he worked from 1905 until 1909 at various companies including the Canarea Consolidated Copper Company and Guerrero Plantation and Investment Company. He returned to Santa Barbara County in 1909 where he worked as a draftsman for both the city engineer and county surveyor. He was elected county surveyor in 1914 and held that position until 1946. While serving as county surveyor, he also maintained a private practice until the surveyor's position became a full-time job in 1931. He served as president of the California County Engineer's Association and was a life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. After retiring, he was elected to the Santa Barbara City Council for one term in 1949 and then became planning commissioner for Santa Barbara County until 1961. An important local figure in the Santa Barbara community, O'Neill edited a history of the county in 1939 and also lectured on California history (Ham and Hope 2003:11-14.)

Less information is available regarding the stone mason Peter Poole. A Scottish stonemason, he was responsible for a number of stone buildings in Santa Barbara. Although Rattlesnake Creek has been subject to numerous floods over time, the bridge still stands solidly over the creek above Skofield Park.

Ray I. Skofield, a New York City stockbroker, purchased the canyon in 1927. In the mid-1920s, his family moved her, hoping climate would help his ailing wife. Ray Skofield, a founding member of Rancheros Visitadores, set aside a part of his property for the group to use in their annual trek over the Santa Ynez Mountains. His son sold this 35 acres to the group in 1950. Who then sold the land to the City of Santa Barbara in 1964. Towards the end of the 1960s, Skofield's daughter and son offered the balance of the family holdings to the City of Santa Barbara as parkland

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and in 1970 with a combination of city, county and federal funds, the transfer of more than 450 acres was compiled – a gift to the thousands of hikers who enjoy the area annually.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### **Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Ham, Stacie, Hope, Andrew. *Survey and Evaluation of Masonry Arch Bridges*, Caltrans State and Local Historic Bridge Inventory update, 2003.

Redmon, Michael. *The History of Rattlesnake Canyon*. Independent. January 20, 2015.

Morlet, Aubrie. *Montecito- Historic Structures/Sites Report: Yanonali Street Bridge Replacement and Pedestrian Improvement Project, Santa Barbara, CA*. Applied Earthworks, Lompoc, CA. 2015.

Santa Barbara Conservancy, *Images of America, Stone Architecture in Santa Barbara*. Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

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### **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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.4577

Longitude: -199.6923

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

The bridge sits on legal parcel number 021-040-024. It sits on the northern boundary of the parcel. The bridge whose boundaries are from the of the bridge itself with walls north and south and piers east and west and creek banks located at 1819 Las Canoas Road, Santa Barbara, California.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the structure of the bridge that maintains historic integrity. The rest of the parcel and landscape have been excluded as there have been changes to the area since the period of significance, 1919.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nicole Hernandez

organization: City Of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department, Planning Division

street & number: 630 Garden Street

city or town: Santa Barbara state: CA zip code: 93105

e-mail: nhernandez@santabarbaraca.gov

telephone: 805-564-5470 x4557

date: 5/13/2016

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**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.

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Section number Photo Log Page 1

Name of Property:	Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge
City or Vicinity	Santa Barbara
County	Santa Barbara
State	CA
Name of Photographer	Nicole Hernandez
Date of Photographs	April 26, 2016
Location of Original Digital Files	630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105

1 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0001  
Street view of north wall and west end pier on south wall, camera facing east.

2 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0002  
East pier of south wall, camera facing west.

3 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0003  
Creek view of the north elevation of the bridge and arch, camera facing southeast.

4 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0004  
Plaque stone in street side of north wall, camera facing north.

5 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0005  
Street view of north wall with east end pier and of south wall, camera facing west.

6 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0006  
Creek view of north elevation of the bridge and arch, camera facing southwest.

7. of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0007  
Interior of arch, camera facing southeast.

8. of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0008  
Creek view of south elevation of the bridge and arch, camera facing north.

9 of 9: CA\_Santa Barbara County\_Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge\_0009  
Detail of keystone peak of arch on south wall and stone work, camera facing north.

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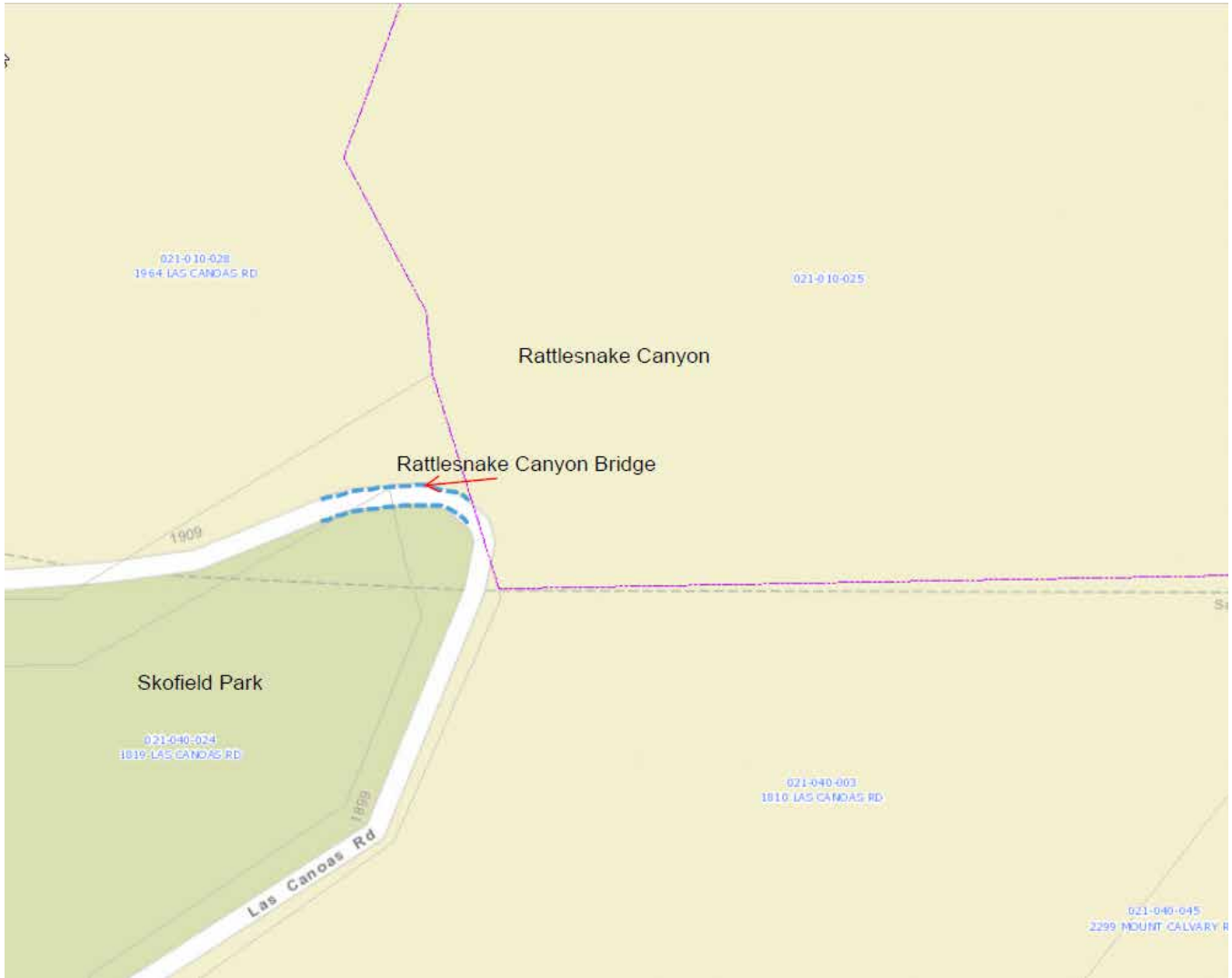
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Map 1: Sketch map showing location of Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge



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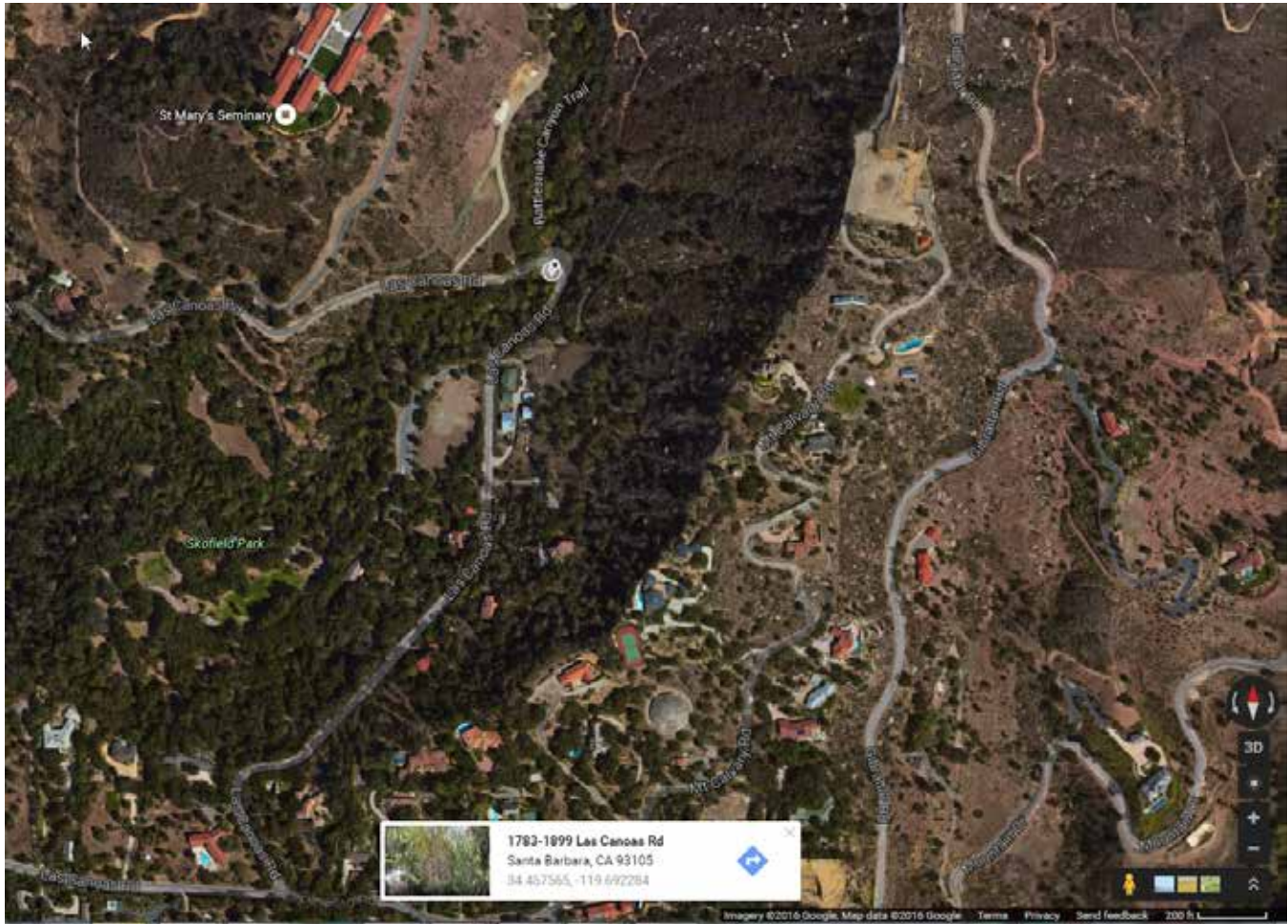
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Map 2: Google Earth map showing location of Rattlesnake Canyon Bridge

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