

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: Little River Turnpike Bridge  
 Other names/site number: Stone Bridge; Aldie Bridge; VDHR No. 053-0244  
 Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Route 50  
 City or town: Aldie State: Virginia County: Loudoun  
 Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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 X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.  
 I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following  
 level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      X statewide      \_\_\_ local  
 Applicable National Register Criteria:  
X A      \_\_\_ B      X C      \_\_\_ D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>  <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>                  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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<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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**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	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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 (vehicular): bridge

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: Road-related (vehicular): bridge

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Two-Span Masonry Arch Bridge

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE; ASPHALT

### 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 Little River Turnpike Bridge is located in the town of Aldie in Loudoun County, Virginia. Constructed in 1826-1827, the two-span (i.e., two-barrel) masonry arch structure measures approximately 108 feet long, 23 feet wide overall, and 20 feet wide inside the parapet walls. Today, it carries two-lane Route 50 across the Little River, a tributary of the Potomac River. The bridge and the roadway it carries are owned and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

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### Narrative Description

Construction of the two-span, masonry arch Little River Turnpike Bridge took place in 1826-1827. The single pier, spandrel walls, parapet, abutments, and wing walls are all constructed of fieldstone. The arch ring (including keystone) and underside of the arch (the “intrados”) are constructed of cut stone, especially well executed on the arch ring. The two segmental arches spring from the abutments and a single pier in the Little River, with the top of the parapet rising to a maximum height of approximately 19 feet above ordinary river level. The single pier extends beyond the upstream and downstream spandrel walls, thus buttressing the structure

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against expansion in those directions. The parapet wall rises to a modest peak above the pier as does the present roadway profile.

The Little River Turnpike Bridge has been modified little over the last 180 years. The roadway has been paved in asphalt, the parapets covered with concrete capstones, shotcrete has been applied to the underside of the arch, and a concrete fender has been installed to protect the upstream side of the pier from debris and scour. The downstream parapet wall was substantially reconstructed in 1998 due to damage from an out-of-control construction trailer. In 2004, the bridge was substantially reinforced by the installation of “grouted anchors,” stainless steel rods surrounded by grout-injected bags designed to consolidate the rubble infill and carry a portion of the “live,” or traffic, loading. The grouted anchor reinforcement was installed by directional drilling and is not visible. These most recent modifications were undertaken by VDOT with sensitivity toward the historic character of the bridge and in consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer.

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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

ARCHITECTURE

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

**Period of Significance**

1826-1896

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

**Significant Dates**

N/A

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

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

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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 Little River Turnpike Bridge is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its direct association with the Little River Turnpike and the Turnpike Era in the transportation history of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Further, it is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of masonry arch bridge construction. The property's period of significance is 1826-1896, encompassing the bridge's initial construction by the Little River Turnpike Company through the end of the turnpike's operation as a toll road in 1896.

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

The Little River Turnpike Bridge is directly associated with the Little River Turnpike and the "Turnpike Era" in the transportation history of the Commonwealth (Virginia Department of Transportation 1992:5-6). There was considerable interest at the turn of the nineteenth-century in improving Virginia's transportation infrastructure and dozens of private companies were chartered by the General Assembly to construct and maintain turnpikes, canals, and railroads – overseen by the Commonwealth's Board of Public Works (BPW). The Little River Turnpike Company (LRTC) was chartered in 1802 to establish "a Turnpike Road from the intersection of Duke Street in the Town of Alexandria with the southwest line of the District of Columbia to the ford of Little River," a distance of approximately 34 miles (LRTC 1817). The company completed 34 miles of "paved road" by 1811, and in 1817 stated its objective to spend surplus funds on "the reducing of the Hills and erecting permanent Bridges over the streams of water crossing said Road" (LRTC 1817). The Little River Turnpike was a prominent turnpike facility of the nineteenth century and its crossing of the Little River in Loudoun County was an essential part of its function and identity. The turnpike continued in operation as a toll road through 1896, after which it became a free road. While the assets of the LRTC ultimately were transferred to County administration and finally the Commonwealth as Route 50, the Little River Turnpike Bridge at Aldie today constitutes the most prominent surviving element of the turnpike.

The most specific mention of the Little River Turnpike Bridge at Aldie comes from the LRTC's annual reports for the years 1826 and 1827. In the report for 1826, the LRTC includes an expense item for \$400 paid "towards a new Bridge erected over Little river at the joint expense of our Comp'y and the Ashbys Gap Turnpike Co. "(LRTC 1827). That project was completed in 1827 and the LRTC's annual report for that year includes an expense item of "\$860.24 balance paid for new Bridge of stone erected over Little river" (LRTC 1828). Surviving LRTC records include little further mention of the Little River Turnpike Bridge. It is certain that a ford existed at that location before creation of the LRTC in 1802 and that a bridge of some type was constructed there by 1826. The LRTC's generally stated objective in 1817 to "erect permanent Bridges" (above) suggests that the first bridge may have been of timber construction since no



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specific mention was made at that time of *any* masonry (i.e., “permanent”) structures. The LRTC’s annual report for the year 1821 further reinforces the need for “permanent” structures by its stated goal “to erect good Bridges with Stone or Brick arches wherever new ones may be required by the wooden ones giving way” (LRTC 1822).

The builder of the Little River Turnpike Bridge is not identified in LRTC records, although a Robert Ratcliff is mentioned as the builder of another stone bridge at Cub Run. The records of the Ashby’s Gap Turnpike Company (AGTC) are generally silent about the Little River Turnpike Bridge, but one document with a date written either as 1824 or 1826 states “at little river is a stone bridge, built at the joint expense of the Company and the Little river Comp’y” (AGTC 1824?). It is possible to infer from this AGTP document that a masonry bridge existed at that location by 1824, though the much more specific description in LRTC records of the joint venture to build “a new Bridge ... over Little river” clearly indicates that the existing structure was built in 1826-1827, regardless of the nature of any predecessor bridges.

As designed and constructed, the Little River Turnpike Bridge embodies the distinctive characteristics of masonry arch bridge construction. Though the distribution of load by arches has been employed in bridge construction for several millennia, masonry arch bridges in Virginia are relatively rare. Fewer than 130 highway arch bridges exist statewide and, of those, only nine are masonry arch structures. Of the nine masonry arch highway bridges, five were built by turnpike companies, including the Little River Turnpike Bridge at Aldie and the Goose Creek Arch Bridge built by the AGTC (also in Loudoun County; Miller et al. 2000). The use of fieldstone masonry, a cut-stone arch ring and keystone, and buttress supports are typical characteristics of the few surviving masonry arch turnpike bridges in Virginia. Those characteristics are especially demonstrated by the Little River Turnpike Bridge through its quality of execution. The fact that the Little River Turnpike Bridge still carries traffic with no weight restrictions (albeit with strengthening) also demonstrates the strength of masonry arch technology through its distinctive form and engineering function.

The Little River Turnpike Bridge exhibits its significance under National Register Criteria A and C through its high integrity of location, setting, feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and association. It remains at its original location and is surrounded by the historic resources of the Aldie community, including the Aldie Mill, Miller’s House, and Mercer House. The design and materials have been little altered except for asphalt paving, concrete parapet caps, shotcrete applied to the underside of the arches, and the addition of a concrete fender to the pier (for scour and debris protection). Recent repairs to the parapet and grouted-anchor reinforcement have been performed with sensitivity to the historic character of the bridge and in consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer. While Route 50 is no longer operated as the Little River Turnpike, the alignment of Route 50 is very close to the original turnpike alignment and the modern highway retains the name “Little River Turnpike” in parts of northern Virginia, a symbolic, if not explicit, association with the “Turnpike Era” in Virginia transportation history.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

#### Ashby's Gap Turnpike Company

1824? Memorial & Petition of the Ashby's Gap Turnpike Co. Board of Public Works Records 204. Library of Virginia, Richmond.

#### Little River Turnpike Company

1817 Jonah Thompson's Report of the Little River Turnpike Company, Summary Statement from 1806 to 1817. Board of Public Works Records 309. Library of Virginia, Richmond.

1822 Report of the President & Directors of the Little River Turnpike Company, January 9, 1822. Board of Public Works Records 309. Library of Virginia, Richmond.

1827 Copy of the Report made by the President and Directors of the Little River Turnpike Company to the Stockholders, January 3, 1827. Board of Public Works Records 309. Library of Virginia, Richmond.

1828 The President and Directors of the Little River Turnpike Company respectfully report to the Stockholders, January 4, 1828. Board of Public Works Records 309. Library of Virginia, Richmond.

#### Miller, Ann B, Kenneth M. Clark, and Matthew C. Grimes

2000 *A Survey of Masonry and Concrete Arch Bridges in Virginia*. Virginia Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville.

#### Virginia Department of Transportation

1992 *A History of Roads in Virginia: "the most convenient ways"*. Virginia Department of Transportation, Richmond and Virginia Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville.

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia;  
Virginia Department of Transportation, Richmond, Virginia

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** VDHR No. 053-0244

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately 2,484 square feet

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

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):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18 | Easting: 271340 | Northing: 4317347 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

The historic property boundaries of the Little River Turnpike Bridge conform to the gross footprint of the structure, which measures approximately 108 feet long and 23 feet wide overall and is entirely within the Virginia Department of Transportation right-of-way.

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

The historic boundary encompasses the entirety of the structure, including the single pier, spandrel walls, parapet, abutments, and wing walls.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Antony F. Opperman, Preservation Program Manager

organization: Virginia Department of Transportation

street & number: 1401 East Broad Street

city or town: Richmond state: Virginia zip code: 23219

e-mail: a.opperman@vdot.virginia.gov

telephone: 804-371-6749

date: February 2014

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

The following information is common to all photographs:

Name of Property: Little River Turnpike Bridge  
City or Vicinity: Aldie  
County: Loudoun County  
State: VA  
Name of Photographer: Joanie Evans  
Date of Photographs: June 2013  
Location of Original Digital Files: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Photo #1 (VA\_LoudounCounty\_LittleRiverTurnpikeBridge\_0001), camera facing northwest.

Photo #2 (VA\_LoudounCounty\_LittleRiverTurnpikeBridge\_0002), camera facing west/southwest.

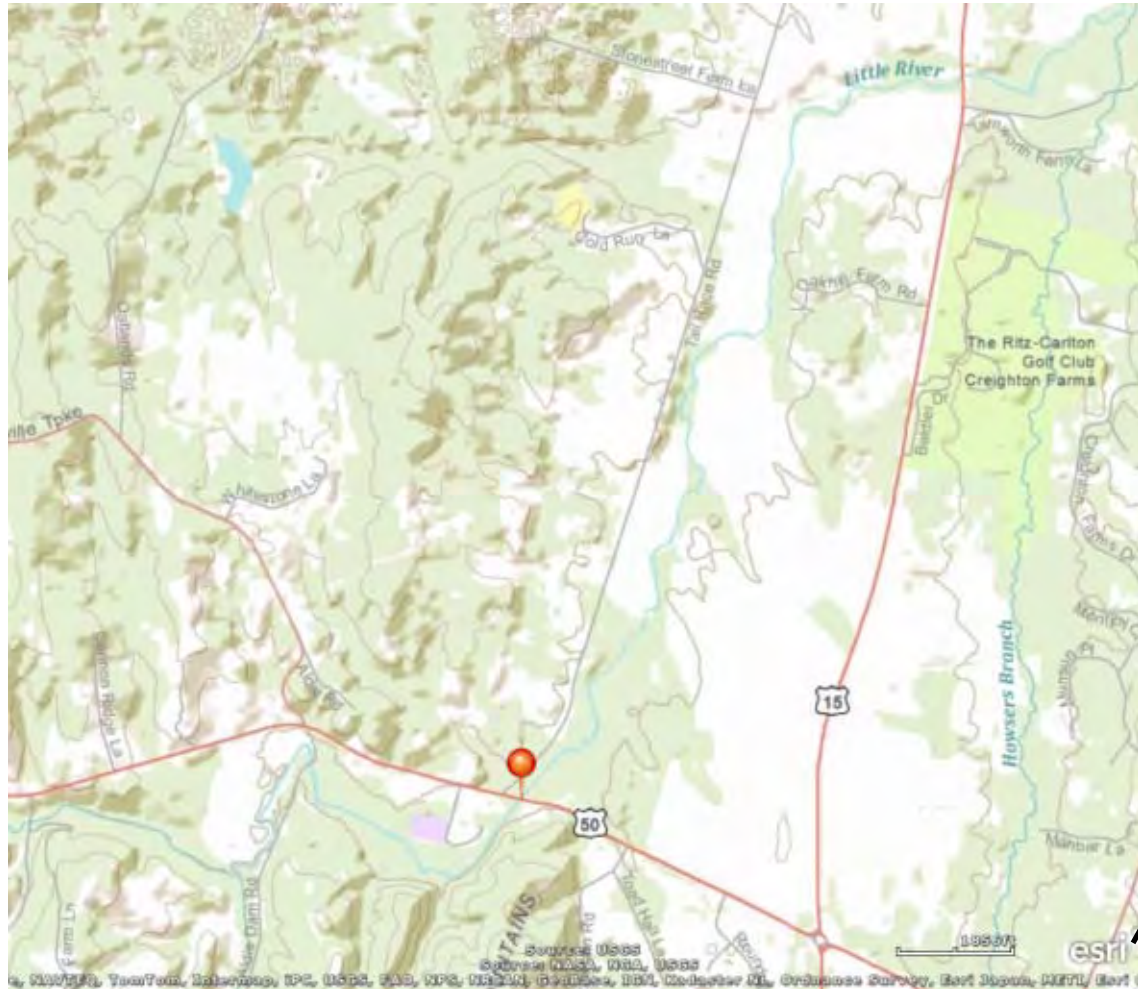
Photo #3 (VA\_LoudounCounty\_LittleRiverTurnpikeBridge\_0003), camera facing northwest.

Photo #4 (VA\_LoudounCounty\_LittleRiverTurnpikeBridge\_0004), camera facing east/southeast.

**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.

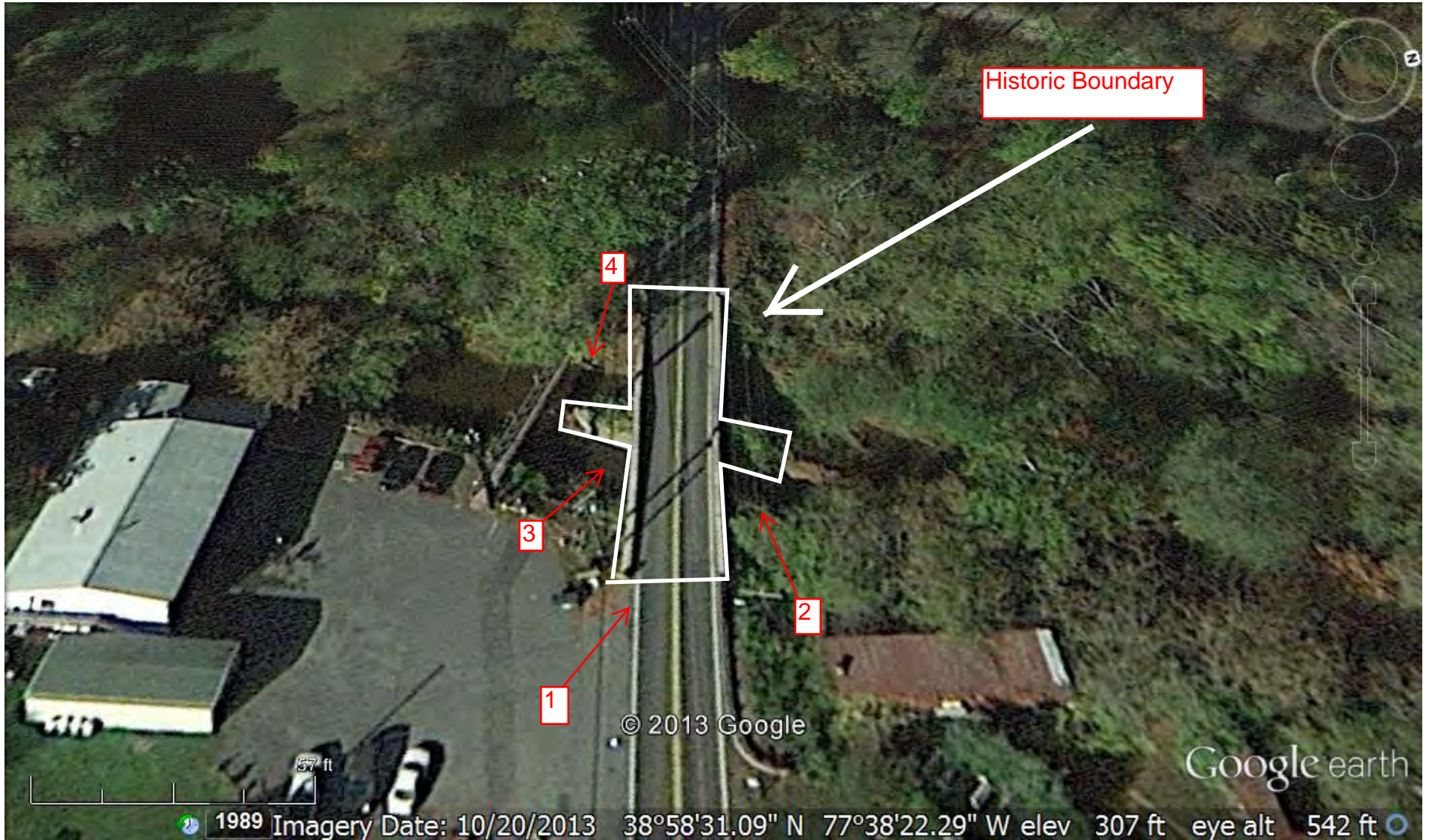
## Little River Turnpike Bridge, Loudoun County, VA



Little River Turnpike Bridge  
Loudoun County, Virginia  
DHR No. 053-0244  
Location Map

Location Coordinates:  
NAD 1983  
Zone 18  
Easting 271340  
Northing 4317347





**Little River Turnpike Bridge  
Loudoun County, Virginia  
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Sketch Map and Photo Key**

 Photo Location



Aerial View/Location of  
**Little River Turnpike Bridge  
(Aldie Bridge)**  
Loudoun County  
Virginia

