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Site Number *(Smithsonian)*	Site Name

Please put the legal locations for document on the back

LEGAL LOCATIONS

Township	Range	Section	Township	Range	Section
4S	12W	3			

A CLASS III CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY of the BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE'S ELKHORN MINE AND MILL REPOSITORY INVESTIGATION, BEAVERHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA

prepared for:

Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC)
PO Box 21,
Divide, MT

Under

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
Permit for Archaeological Investigations BDF20003, expiring in 2024

By:

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August 3, 2023

ABSTRACT

Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC), Divide, Montana, contracted with GCM Services, of Butte, to conduct a Class III cultural resource inventory of a proposed 11-acre soils repository locale in the upper Elkhorn Creek drainage in Beaverhead County on the Beaverhead–Deerlodge National Forest. This project, called "Elkhorn Mine and Mill: Repository Investigation" is funded in part by the Department of Agriculture. The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is the lead permitting agency for the project. The cultural resource inventory was conducted under Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Permit BDF20003, expiring in 2024. David Ferguson conducted the Class III inventory on July 18, 2023. The goal of the inventory was to locate and record all cultural resources over 50 years old within the study area. No previously recorded cultural resources are on record within the 11-acre study area. No cultural resources were found, and no further work is recommended.

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INTRODUCTION

Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC), Divide, Montana, contracted with GCM Services, of Butte, to conduct a Class III cultural resource inventory of a proposed 11-acre soils repository locale in the upper Elkhorn Creek drainage in Beaverhead County on the Beaverhead–Deerlodge National Forest. This project, called "Elkhorn Mine and Mill: Repository Investigation" is funded in part by the Department of Agriculture. The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is the lead permitting agency for the project. The Class III inventory was requested to comply with Section 106 for this undertaking. The cultural resource inventory was conducted under Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Permit BDF20003, expiring in 2024. David Ferguson conducted the Class III inventory on July 18, 2023.

The goal of the inventory was to locate and record all cultural resources over 50 years old within the study area. No previously recorded cultural resources are on record within the 11-acre study area.

The purpose of the proposed undertaking is to expand an existing contaminated repository site to add additional contaminated soils from the Elkhorn-Coolidge mill site. Contaminated soils remain in and around the Elkhorn mill foundation and the associated mine dumps. The Elkhorn Creek drainage is a tributary of the Wise River, a tributary of the Big Hole River. The specific action associated with this project is designed to protect this waterway from metals and acid drainage.

The study area is in NWNE and ENENW Section 3, Township 4 South, Range 12 West. (Lat: 45.52034, Long:-113.06760). A total of about 11 acres was inventoried.

Figure 1 shows the Class III Inventory parcel on the USGS 1:24,000-scale map, *Elkhorn Hot Springs* (1988). Figure 2 is the project area map in Google Earth view as supplied by BHWC.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The inventory identified no cultural resources in the study area. No cultural resources had been previously recorded in the survey parcel. No additional work is recommended.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is located about 50 miles southwest of Butte, Montana on the west side of the Pioneer Mountain Range. The site is situated in a narrow north/south trending valley, which forms part of the upper drainage for the Wise River. Elkhorn Creek flows through the site to the north into the Wise River, which, in tum, flows northward into the Big Hole River. The terrain is mountainous and heavily forested. Major local peaks include Tweedy and Barb mountains (11,154 ft and 10,497 ft) located four to five miles to the southeast and Comet and Saddleback mountains (10,212 ft and 10,118 ft) located four miles to the south miles to the south.

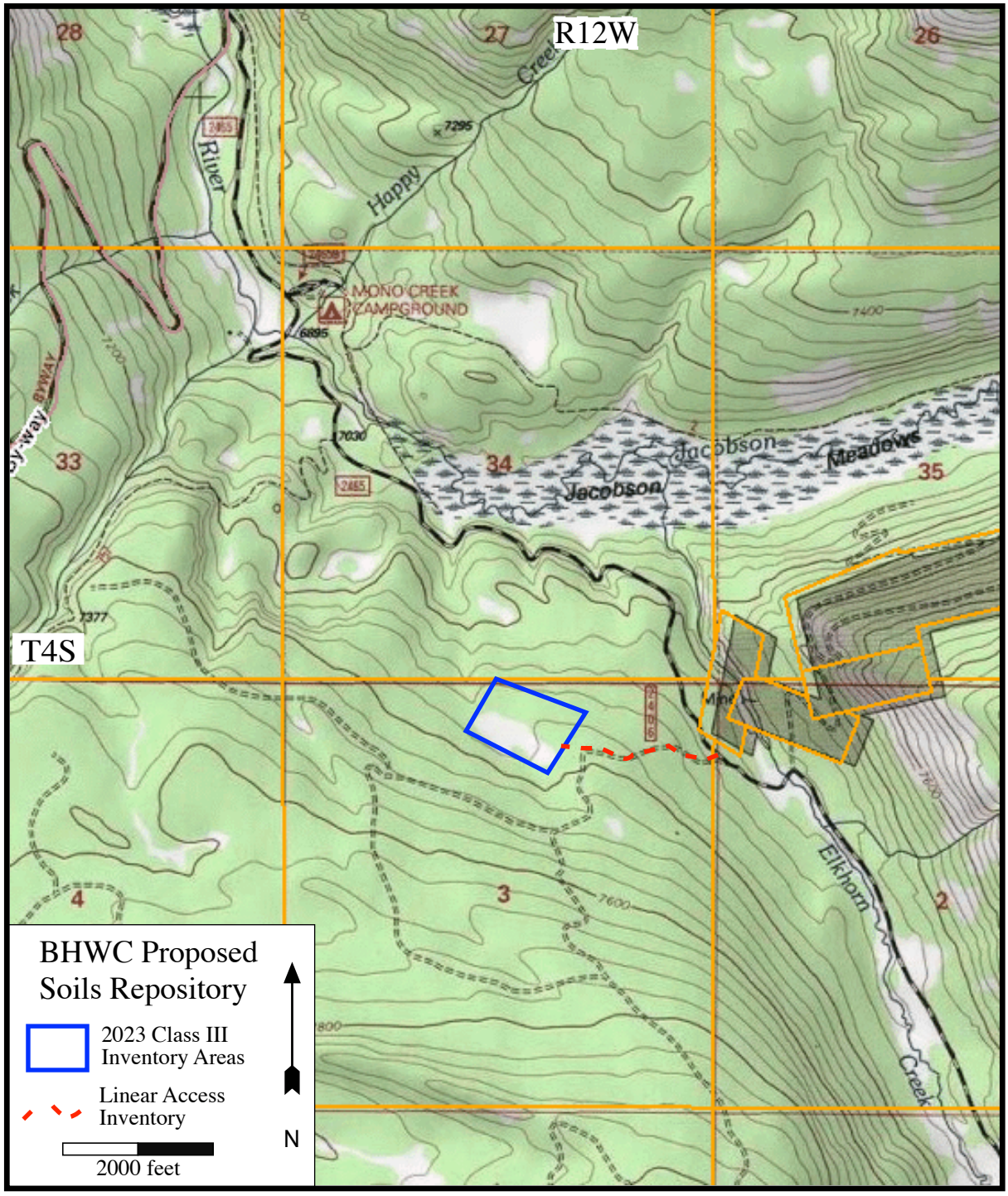

Figure 1. The Class III survey parcel on the USGS 1:24,000-scale map, *Elkhorn Hot Springs* (1988).

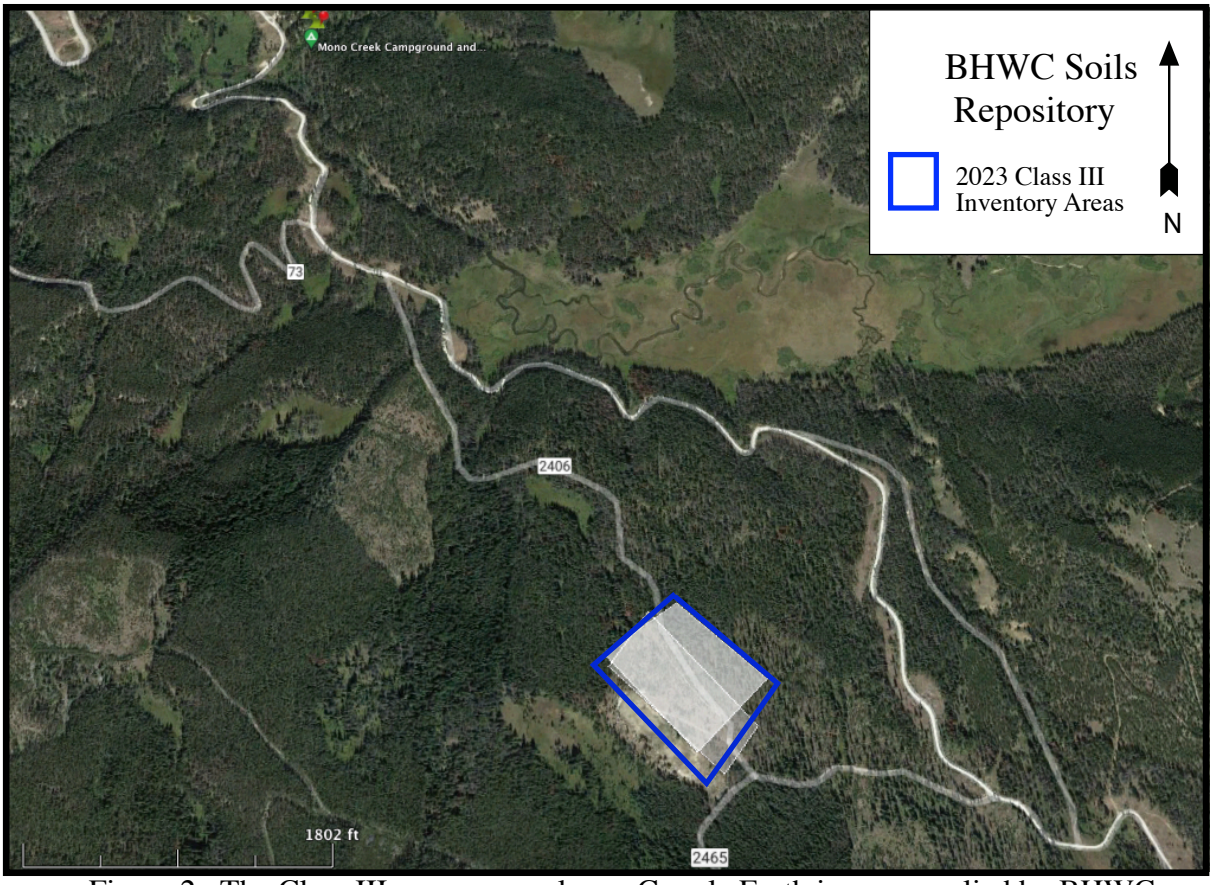

Figure 2. The Class III survey parcel on a Google Earth image supplied by BHWC.

The study area occupies a low bench south of the Elkhorn Creek drainage bottom at about 7,360 feet elevation. This region has extraordinarily high snowfall due to its position between mountain ridges. Snow begins by late October and by November in the valley floor. Snow commonly drifts to a depth of several feet and remains until late May or June.

The project is within a mountainous forest environment dominated by dense stands of lodgepole pine, Douglas fir and limber pine. Shrubs found in the undergrowth include whortleberry, shiny leaf spiraea, rose spiraea and Utah honeysuckle. Grasses in the open areas include pine reedgrass, elk sedge, and bluegrasses.

The manmade environment aspect of this project area is significant. In the 1990s, contaminated soils were removed from the nearby Elkhorn-Coolidge mine and mill complex, and a soil repository developed on a portion of the current study area. This previous repository has been re-contoured and capped. The area has also been logged, possibly in association with the past repository development. In short, the study area shows significant man-made alterations. Figures 3-7 are photographs of the study area.

Figure 3. Overview of the study parcel looking north from the southern edge.

Figure 4. Overview looking northwest at existing (1990s) soil repository.

Figure 5. Overview looking south at the existing (1990s) soil repository.

Figure 6. Overview looking southeast across existing soil repository.

Figure 7. View north on the existing access road.

METHODS

Existing cultural records were examined for the area prior to the pedestrian inventory. A Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) and Cultural Resource Annotated Bibliography System (CRABS) database search (SHPO project 2023060701) were conducted through the State Historic Preservation Office (Murdo, 2023). The data base shows four previous cultural resource inventories had been conducted in the vicinity. Al four studies were conducted by the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest related to timber harvests or hazardous tree removal along the Elkhorn Road. No cultural resources were previously identified in the study area.

David Ferguson conducted the pedestrian inventory on July 21, 2023. The inventory was equivalent to a BLM "Class III" Cultural Resource Inventory having transected widths of 25 meters or less. The purpose of the inventory was to locate any cultural sites over 50 years old, and to evaluate such sites in terms of the National Register of Historic Places.

The survey was conducted without subsurface testing or collection. Subsurface exposure was limited in places due to vegetation cover. The area has been extensively disturbed by the previous logging, the existing soil repository and reclamation activity.

The intensive pedestrian inventory was conducted of the access route and irregularly shaped project parcel using "Collector" software for ArcGIS. Corners were plotted using GPS units (WASS enabled) and Collector software for ArcGIS. Photographs were taken in digital format with 15-18 megapixel densities. The proposed access route is an extant road previously used to access the site. The access route was inspected to a width of about 15 feet

on each side of the existing road. The area has been heavily impacted. No difficulties in examining the study area were encountered.

Research sources included the GLO records (Master Title Plats, Mineral Survey Plats) (available online) and the library of GCM Services, which includes comprehensive mining district records for Montana, previously compiled for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Abandon Mines Cleanup Bureau by Paul Anderson (1984, 1990). Other sources consulted were current DEQ databases, general histories of Montana, Montana Mine and Mineral indices at the Montana Tech library, Montana Historical Society Archives (including the W.R. Allen Papers, vertical files, and the photographic index).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The study area lies about two miles north of the Elkhorn Mine and Mill and the associated ghost town of Coolidge. This complex is listed on the National Register. The proposed undertaking is a repository for contaminated soils from those operations, hence the project is associated with the Elkhorn-Coolidge complex but is not proximal to, nor related in any historic sense.

The Elkhorn District did not come to prominence until the second decade of the twentieth century. Then virtually all mining activity centered on the Elkhorn lode. The massive operation to develop the lode turned out to be one of Montana's last and largest silver mining ventures. The development, operation and ultimate failure of the Elkhorn project is illustrative of the lures and pitfalls of many similar large-scale mining operations, which have come and gone in Montana during the past century.

Preston Sheldon made the first discovery of silver ore in the Elkhorn district in 1872. He shipped a carload of the ore, assaying 300 ounces of silver to the ton, from his Old Elkhorn claim. This claim was located about a mile southwest of later Coolidge/Elkhorn townsite and mine. In 1874, Mike T. Steele located the Storm claim - adjacent to the west side of the Old Elkhorn claim - and shipped two carloads of ore, assaying 260 ounces of silver to the ton. Little additional activity occurred in the Elkhorn district until the 1880s.

The completion of the Utah and Northern railroad to Silver Bow in December of 1881 triggered the location of a number of additional claims and the opening of mines throughout the Pioneer Mountains. The Dillon Examiner reported on January 27, 1892, that thirteen mines in the district were producing, including the Critic, Fraction, Navajo, Good Enough, Park, Red Sky, Hamburg, Washington, Guy, Last Chance, Cleopatra, Mascott [sic], and Cleveland. A 10-stamp mill had been built at the Critic and Fraction mines. In 1893, however silver prices crashed and all the mining operations throughout the district closed down for the next decade, except for a small amount of prospecting work (Sassman 1933).

W.R. Allen and the Elkhorn Mine

Mike T. Steele and F. W. Pahnish located the Elkhorn lode was on October 24, 1873, and a small mill was built on the site. For the next two decades, small amounts of high-grade ore

were mined. In 1893 the Elkhorn shut down along with the district's other mines. By 1903, silver prices had recovered to a point where it seemed feasible to revive the Elkhorn mine. Tom Judge found a rich vein of silver ore while prospecting on the Elkhorn Ledge and some interest was generated to reopen the mine. In 1906, Frank Felt bought a number of claims in the district and started a tunnel on the Idanha vein, which eventually became the major producing mine for the Elkhorn group. Two years later, in 1909, the tunnel would be further developed by the Park Mining Company, which extended it to 748 feet (Sassman 1941; Wirtz and Lovell 1976).

Large-scale development of the Elkhorn lode got underway in 1911. William R. Allen, former lieutenant governor of Montana turned mining entrepreneur, became interested in the property and devoted his efforts to developing the Elkhorn mines on a scale which dwarfed anything attempted in the area before or since. Allen was born in July 1871 in French Gulch, a small mining camp south of Anaconda, Montana. He was educated in Deer Lodge County public schools and attended the Helena Business College and Harvard University. In 1891, he was hired by Marcus Daly to manage the Anaconda Company's electric light, sheet metal, railway and water works department. He also managed Daly's lumber business, which was one of the major components of Daly's development of the Anaconda smelter complex. In addition, Allen maintained an interest in a number of mining claims his father had developed in the French Gulch area (Anderson 1984, 1990).

Allen, a Republican, was elected to the Montana House of Representatives in 1902. He served in the legislature until 1908 when he was elected lieutenant governor under Governor Edwin L. Norris. Although it seemed that Allen had a promising future in politics, he resigned as lieutenant governor in 1913 to devote his efforts to the Elkhorn project. He was able to interest financiers in London and Boston in the venture. He helped form the Boston & Montana Development Corporation in 1913 and became its president. Incorporated with $15,000,000 in capital stock, Allen spent $474,000 of his own funds to purchase the principal mining claims, including the Elkhorn, Blue-Eyed Annie, Park, Idanha, Central, Aspen, Red Top, Mono, Boston, Grotto, Homestake, Washington and Blue Jay, which he then sold to the new corporation. Ultimately, the company was able to acquire all the claims in a 1600-acre area. This was part of a deliberate policy to avoid the "Apex Law" situation, which had once existed in Butte where conflicting adjoining claims led to endless litigation (Sassman 1941; Evans 1946, Boston-Montana Development Company 1918).

Allen also formed the Boston-Montana Milling and Power Company to develop the mine and mill while another subsidiary, the Butte and Pacific Railway Company, was formed to construct a railroad line from the town of Divide on the Big Hole River to the mine.

Extensive exploration work had already been underway on the 68 claims (only nine were actually patented) held by the Boston-Montana Development Company. Most of the major ore veins of the Elkhorn district crossed this group of claims. Of these veins, the Blue Jay had the highest grade of ore, while the Idanha, located just above the Elkhorn mill, came to be the company's greatest producer. Three tunnels had been driven on the Grotto claim, a 600-foot tunnel was run on a vein at the Aspen, two shafts were sunk on the Blue-Eyed

Annie and shafts and tunnels were found on the Park, Elkhorn, Storm, Red Sky, Homestake, Ruby, Bonanza, Mary, Montreal, and Washington claims. A 900-foot tunnel with a 600-foot crosscut with a double-track tunnel was started in October 1913 to tap the Idanha vein (Geach 1972; Sassman 1941).

A wagon road had been built to the mines, but it was obvious that a rail line would be needed. Preliminary work on the route was done in 1914. Heavy machinery for the mines was purchased, but the outbreak of World War I delayed English backers financing the railroad. Construction work on the railroad finally got underway in May of 1917. The line for the Montana Southern Railroad was run up the Big Hole River from Divide and then up the Wise River to the mines. It was completed by December 1919 and was reported to have been the last narrow-gauge railway built in the United States. The railroad was equipped with three Baldwin locomotives, 28 freight cars, three passenger cars, a machine shop, an engine house and depots at a total cost of $1,500,000 or more (Sassman 1941; Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology files on Montana mining properties; Wirtz and Lovell 1976).

With completion of the railroad, heavy equipment and materials for the mill could be transported to the mine site. Work on the mill was begun immediately and the construction of a 65,000-volt power line from Divide to the mine and Coolidge was begun. About $900,000 was spent on the construction of the mill, while another $150,000 was spent on the power line. Completed in 1922, it was the largest mill in Montana. It was equipped with steam heat, a sprinkler system, a 2500 cubic-foot air compressor, two crushers, two ball-mills, four classifiers, 16 concentrating tables, two settling tanks, two thickener tanks, a large filter and 52 electric motors to operate the mill's oil-flotation system designed by 0. B. Hoffstrand. The system had the capacity to process 750 tons of ore per day with a recovery rate of 90 to 93 percent (Sassman 1941; Evans 1946; Wirtz and Lovell 1976; Mining Record 1981).

Most of the ore processed by the mill came from the Idanha tunnel at the 300-foot level, which was located at the upper camp, 800 vertical feet above the mill. Ore from the Idanha could be lowered through the No. 1 raise to the lower tunnel at the 1000-foot level where electric locomotives hauled ore cars a quarter mile to the mill. Ore from other shafts and adits at the upper camp was brought to the mill via a rail cable car system that ran down the mountain side from an ore bin at the upper camp to an ore bin a few yards north of the lower mine tunnel portal. The tramway employed a gravity system where loaded cars going down pulled the empty cars back to the top. The tramway had an unusual three-rail track, except in the middle where the rails divided so the cars could pass each other. From the ore bin at the bottom, ore was transferred to the lower electric tramway, which hauled it to the mill. No forced-air ventilation system was needed for the mine workings, which were adequately ventilated by natural convection currents from the Park Shaft (Sassman 1941; Evans 1946; Wirtz and Lovell 1976).

Also located at the “upper camp” were a sawmill, three bunkhouses, a boarding house, six log cabins, a cookhouse, stables, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, the hoist, and an ore-sorting house (Evans 1946).

Coolidge Townsite

Construction of the major portion of the Coolidge mining camp was begun around 1914; at the same time the mines were first extensively developed. Allen named the town after Calvin Coolidge who had become a friend of Allen's while Coolidge was still lieutenant governor of Massachusetts. Coolidge never visited his namesake, but there were reports that he had invested in the mine. When work started on the mill in 1919, large number of workers and miners moved into the camp. Initially, many of the miners lived in tents upon board platforms. Later, more substantial log or board and tarpaper residences were built (Sassman 1941; Wirtz and Lovell 1976; Patterson 1989).

A company store sold equipment to the miners, as well as food and other necessities to the community's residents. Below the store, there was a boarding house where many of the miners ate. For amusement, miners and townspeople could visit the pool hall, run by Elmer Ripley. There were no saloons in town, but liquid spirits were said to have been available from a still located near the town. Skiing and sledding were popular pastimes during the winter (Wirtz and Lovell 1976).

Company offices, other boarding houses and bunkhouses were also part of the community. The town was equipped with electric power and telephone service although plumbing was rudimentary and few houses or boarding houses had facilities for bathing. Elizabeth Patterson, the daughter of William Allen, who lived in Coolidge as a young girl, said that most of the town's residents went to the mill when they wanted to take a shower. Postmasters Frank H. Tyro and Evan L. Woolman ran the post office for 10 years, from 1922 to 1932, when it was closed for good. A school district was organized in October of 1918 to operate the school for the town's 20 or so school children until the early 1930s. Although the town had most of the amenities of other small communities, it did not have any churches. At its peak, Coolidge probably had a population of around 350. Most of the residents of Coolidge came from the local area or were from Butte and Dillon. Elizabeth Patterson and Gilbert Dodgson, who worked at the site, both reported that there were no blacks, Chinese or other distinctive ethnic groups in town (Anderson 1984, 1990; Sassman 1941; Wirtz and Lovell 1976; Patterson 1989; Dodgson 1990).

The Demise of the Elkhorn Operations 1922 – 1950

The Boston-Montana Development Company spent an estimated $5,000,000 developing the Elkhorn mine project. At the start of 1922 it appeared the undertaking was about to fulfill the expectations of Allen and the other investors: the mill was a modem, efficient system ready to process the ores; the mine workings were well equipped and were being developed by experienced miners; the narrow-gauge railway was ready to haul the processed ore; and, the high voltage line to power the mines and mill had been completed. However, before the mill even went into production, serious problems began to appear. The economy had slowed down during the 1920-1921 recession and, to make matters worse, the company' bond and note issues, along with other financial obligation, came due during this same period. These debts and obligations probably could have been met if the mines and mill had been able to go into full production but it was discovered almost as

soon as the mill went into production that the veins of ore were not developed enough to supply sufficient ore to keep the mill operating at even half its capacity. A decision was then made to mine low-grade ore as well as high-grade ore but even this move failed to produce adequate ore for the mill. Although 24,000 feet of underground workings were developed by 1925, it was not enough and the depressed economy prevented raising the necessary capital for mine development. Only one section of the mill's two parallel flotation systems was ever used and then only for three months in 1922-1923 and four months in 1925 (Sassman 1941; Evans 1946; Geach 1972; Krohn and Weist 1977).

Within a year after the mill started production, the company was placed under a stockholder's receivership. The company was eventually able to liquidate its debts but was forced to seriously curtail its underground development program. Despite this limited development, by 1927 some 120,000 tons of ore were blocked out to be mined, the ore bins were filled with 3,000 tons of ore and six cars of concentrates were ready for shipment from the mill. But then, the final blow in the series of misfortunes experienced by the company occurred in June of that year when a Montana Power Company dam on Pattengail Creek broke, flooding the lower Wise River valley and washing out 12 miles of the Montana Southern Railroad tracks and several of the line's bridges across the Big Hole River. The line was repaired by 1930 but by then the Great Depression had begun and metal prices had declined to a point where it was not possible for the company to resume production (Sassman 1941; Evans 1946; Geach 1972; Wirtz and Lovell 1976).

The company was reorganized in 1933, but by the end of the 1940s most of the company's deeded properties had been acquired by Beaverhead County in lieu of taxes. William Allen continued for the next two decades to try and revive the Elkhorn mines. Although he lost his personal fortune in the enterprise, Allen continued to believe that the Elkhorn Group mines were a potential bonanza until his death in 1953 at his home in Wise River (MHS Archives, WR Allen Papers).

At their peak, the mine and mill employed 250 men, yet a total of only 26,000 tons of ore was mined from 1921 through 1924. Total production from the Elkhorn mines was 52,385 tons of ore and from that, 8,900 tons of concentrates were produced for shipment to smelters at Tooele, Utah and East Helena, Montana. The concentrates yielded 851,725 pounds of lead, 4,100 pounds of zinc, 370,799 pounds of copper, 180,843 ounce of silver and 1,013 ounces of gold. In 1949 the company reported the total production of the Elkhorn mines amounted to $375,000. This figure, however, could not begin to match the estimated $5 million that was invested in the project (Sassman 1941; Trauerman and Reyner 1950; Geach 1972; Krohn and Weist 1977).

Summary

The Elkhorn mine project is significant as an example of one of the few large-scale silver mining projects in Montana during the early part of the twentieth century. During this period most mining operations in the region were small-scale operations that, for the most part either reopened old mine workings or reworked old mine dumps. Butte and Elkhorn were the exceptions. In Butte silver production was a by-product of the copper, zinc and

manganese mines. The Elkhorn project was almost the only large-scale mining development during the 1920s designed solely for silver production. Even more significant, it is an example of how a project of this magnitude can fail even though it had large-scale investment, systematic development of the mines along with the processing and transportation facilities, use of the most modern equipment and techniques, and the existence of sizeable and proven ore deposits. The 1927 Wise River flood illustrate the effects an unforeseen accidental event can have on an enterprise such as the Elkhorn project.

Ultimately, it was not bad luck that caused the failure of the Elkhorn enterprise, but bad planning. The remote and difficult location of the Elkhorn mines required large investments in the transportation power and processing facilities, but company leaders inexplicably did not adequately plan for the necessary amount of production to cover the costs of development. The large capital outlay for the development of the Elkhorn facilities thus proved to be a serious detriment to the success of the project. The usual sequence has been for a mine to conduct serious development operations and limited production in order to determine the extent and nature of the ore reserves and then to construct the necessary processing and transportation facilities to handle the mine's output. However, a management decision was made to greatly expand the mill and to build the railroad to the site. These projects, unfortunately, took precedence over development of the underground workings.

The company may have concentrated on developing the surface facilities in order to impress potential investors or perhaps the Elkhorn venture was simply a case, all-to-often seen in mining ventures, of wishful thinking getting the upper hand over objective analysis and sound planning. This was, of course, not the first time this had happened to a mining operation. In 1868, J. Ross Browne, in his annual report on the mineral resources of the West noted the high failure rate of western mines and quoted A. K. Eaton who stated that:

> ... the principal difficulty... has been the imperfect management of these different enterprises. One great error has been made by almost all. It has arisen from the over-sanguine belief that [ore] could be mined in quantity without preliminary expense in development. The mills are erected, the money and patience of the proprietors exhausted, and with untold wealth the machinery is left to rust and rot for want of ore. Today nearly every mill in the Territory could be worked most profitably by the expenditure of a few thousand dollars in the thorough opening of the mines belonging to them (Browne 1868:497).

Elkhorn- Coolidge District and the National Register of Historic Places

Although the lower section of the mill was torn down for salvage in the 1980s [the 18-inch wood beams were reported to have been used in the construction of a restaurant in Idaho Falls] and the remaining upper section of the mill was later demolished by its private owner, some of the Elkhorn mine buildings are partially standing, primarily at the upper camp, and the other remaining features are sufficiently intact to convey the system of the mining and milling operations. Coolidge and the Elkhorn mine area contain the remains of over 140 features and structures ranging from depressions to standing structures.

The Elkhorn Mill, Elkhorn main adit, associated townsite of Coolidge and the "Upper Camp" are combined as a historic mining district / site, 24BE0997 and are listed on the National Register as a National Historic Property (Ryan and Fulbright 2008).

The foundation of the district's eligibility is Criterion A, for its historic and economic contributions to the area, *circa* 1914 to 1922 and its contribution to industrial mining history, and Criterion B, for its association with William Allen, a prominent Montana mine developer, timber developer and political figure. The major structures of the more than 140 described features at 24BE0997 are no longer standing, having been dismantled, salvaged or vandalized by 1980. The 1990s soils remediation removed or altered other significant features such as the tailings pond and Elkhorn mine dump, but the overall site retains sufficient integrity to be interpreted. The site lacks sufficiently intact structures with individual design or engineering values to be considered under Criterion C, although the site as a whole retains engineering value as an example of the systems of transportation, mine plant design and layout used with available technology in the early 20th century development. This site exhibits no potential for an intact subsurface archaeological component that would yield important information about local or regional history (Criterion D).

The National Register nomination form and 24BE0997 district boundary do not encompass the project area.

PREHISTORIC CONTEXT

Although several cultural resource studies have taken place in the Pioneer Mountains and Big Hole River drainage, primarily in conjunction with range management and hardrock mining projects, no modern overviews adequately synthesize the available data. A broader area is required to characterize the cultural chronology of southwestern Montana. The region is complicated by a combination of influences from the Northern Plains, Great Basin and possibly the Plateau region. For purposes of this report, the Northwestern Plains cultural chronology defined by Frison (1978; 1991) is used. Human occupation of the Pioneer range spans from the Paleo Indian Period (12,000 BP to 8,500 BP) to the Late Prehistoric Period (1800 BP-300 BP).

The Proto-Historic Period (400 BP-200 BP) refers to that relatively short span of time from roughly the acquisition of horses and other European goods and materials by the indigenous peoples of the Northern Plains, roughly 1700-1750 AD, until the Historic Period (the appearance of written records of the area), generally starting with the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-1806 and early fur trade, missionary, and military expeditions up to the late 1840s. During this proto-historic period both Euro Americans, though few in number, and indigenous peoples were present in the site area, and their tool kits and associated material culture was similar. Percussion weapons, steel knives, scrapers, hatchets, fire starting steels, gun flints, forged iron traps, iron trade arrowheads and tack accouterments would be indicative of this period, although stone tool use undoubtedly persisted depending upon the availability of iron and steel.

The Shoshone, Bannock, Salish (Flathead) and Blackfeet would have been the principal native inhabitants of this area, at least seasonally, at time of European contact. During the Proto-Historic Period, Shoshone and Bannock territory included the southwestern Montana mountain ranges and valleys, extending southerly into western Wyoming and eastern Idaho. Salish territory was primarily western Montana, in the Bitterroot and Flathead valleys, but extended on a seasonal basis east of the Continental Divide onto the plains of central Montana. The Blackfeet generally occupied an area north and west of the Missouri River but made inroads into southwestern and south-central Montana on a regular basis as well.

W. R. Allen, a future lieutenant governor of Montana, was born in the mining camp of French Gulch, about 30 miles to the northeast, in 1871. In his published reminiscences, The Chequemegon (1949), Allen recounts several meetings with indigenous peoples during his childhood in the French Creek Valley, citing "The Blackfoot, Crows and Flathead Indians who would come around the camp during the summer months to fish and hunt." Allen also reports a personal encounter as a small boy with Nez Perce Chief Looking Glass, who, leading a band of "500 or more" rode by the mining camp and surprised Allen with his friendliness and "fairly good English."

RESULTS OF FIELD INVENTORY

No cultural resources were found within the study parcel or on the access road inventory area.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A finding of 'no effect' is recommended. No additional work is recommended.

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