

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - ELK CITY REGION

Number 195

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Historic-site reports contain information designed to assist in two preservation functions. One is preservation planning at the local level. The other is the work of federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities to comply with historic-preservation requirements prescribed by federal statutes and regulations. These reports summarize local archaeological, historical, and geographical contexts; existing surveys of historic sites; architectural, engineering, industrial; and other cultural resources; and available maps and literature concerning each area. Natural geographical, rather than governmental, boundaries have been used to identify seventy-two areas that vary greatly in size. Site reports reflect a broad cultural and geographical disparity characteristic of diverse regional components found in Idaho, but the areas are designed to incorporate cultural elements of immediate local significance that need to be taken into account for preservation planning.

1. Geographical context: mineral resources and forest products are important in this area. Because of a mining withdrawal of Elk City's township, part of this timberland is omitted from Forest Service administration. Roads connect up a number of mining districts and provide access to timber sales in non-wilderness portions. Elevations in this generally mountainous south ford area range from to .

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: after the last great Missoula-Spokane flood, which surged and splashed from Pasco up Snake River past Lewiston into Idaho some 12,000 years ago, people moved back into Snake and Clearwater canyons, where they have been active ever since. Traces of human occupation of higher canyon and prairie country also go back for eight thousand years or so, and lower Clearwater pit houses have been in use for five thousand years or more.

3. Engineering inventory:

4. Historical summary:

5. Historical documentation and literature:

6. Historic sites inventory:

7. Industrial archaeological and engineering sites summary:
Surface evidence of placer mining in this area offers opportunities for study of industrial procedures utilized in historic production. Hydraulic pits, patterns of dredging operations, or tailings that distinguish hill claims from stream claims--or that identify Chinese services--provide information of historic importance. Prospector's pits disclose gravels that were searched unsuccessfully for gold. Ditches, flumes, stream diversions, and similar evidence of water sources also are important.

Lode mining operations left a variety of indications, many of them relatively permanent in nature. Disturbance of surface outcrops includes trenches and exploratory shafts. In other places, tunnels and raises or stopes that reached surface outlets reveal important aspects of mining activity. If accessible, underground workings have still greater importance for industrial archaeology and engineering analysis. Abandoned tools and equipment, along with items like timbering in tunnels and stopes, add to this record.

8. Architectural resources: the Elk City region has sites of architectural significance associated with the Forest Service, mining, ranching, logging, and recreation. Settlement began in 1861 with the influx of miners from Orofino Creek; some sites survive from that early era of settlement. Wood is the predominant building material. The study area has numerous examples of horizontal timber construction and frame construction. Most buildings are folk types or vernacular renditions of architectural styles.

Twenty-five architectural sites are recorded in the Idaho Historic Sites Survey. They are divided evenly among the communities of Dixie, Elk City, Orogrande, Red River Hot Springs, and the rural areas around those settlements. Towns and centers that have received no attention include the following:

Fall
Golden
Newsome

No sites of architectural significance are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. United States Geological Survey Maps.

Anderson Butte 1966
Black Hawk Mtn. 1966
Boston Mtn.
Buffalo Hump
Burgdorf (15') 1956

Center Star Mtn. 1962
Corral Hill 1963
Dairy Mtn. 1963
Dixie
Elk City 1966
Golden 1962
Goodwin Meadows 1963
Grangeville East 1963
Green Mtn. 1966
Hanover Mtn. 1963
Harpster 1963
Huddleson Bluff 1963
Hungry Ridge 1963
Iron Mtn. 1962
Lick Point 1966
Marble Butte 1963
Moose Butte
North Pole
Orogrande
Pilot Knob 1962
Sable Hill 1966
Sawyer Ridge 1963
Silver Spur Ridge
Sourdough Peak 1963
Spread Creek Point
Trapper Creek
Warren

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: