

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - NORTH FORK CLEARWATER COORDINATED INTENSIVE SURVEY

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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: Occupying about 2,600 square miles of Clearwater mountain ranges, this area is cut by a series of deep canyons through which various north fork components flow in circuitous and indirect courses. Some logging railroads and fringe highways and forest service roads penetrate parts of this wilderness empire. Largely forested and practically devoid of agricultural lands, this region has provided some limited mining opportunities. Elevations range from a thousand feet to 7,175 on Pot Mountain and 7,033 at Indian Post Office.

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: Some 10,000 years of human activity has been documented archaeologically in this area--a time span which matches that of Snake River Canyon further south. A major Indian fishing site at Bruce's Eddy is of special prehistoric importance as well as to later Nez Perce Indians. Indian Post Office, a Lolo Trail monument, is another Nez Perce site. Traditionally Nez Perce country, this territory has prehistoric cultural materials of a Nez Perce type.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature: Most North Fork cultural resource surveys have been conducted in

preparation for filling Dworshak reservoir--two by Idaho State University followed by a final University of Idaho investigation.

Ken Ames has prepared a Clearwater archaeological overview which identifies these findings and provides cultural resource information and interpretation for this area. Between 100 and 200 North Fork archaeological sites have been located, but more intensive survey is needed.

4. Historical summary: Major historical episodes include

1. Exploration, 1805-1860
2. Prospecting and mining, 1860-1867
3. Lolo Trail improvement and railway surveys, 1867-1900
4. Twentieth-century forestry

Lewis and Clark's Lolo Trail route took them along a high North Fork divide segment in 1805-1806. Less early Montana trail Clearwater-Saint Joe divide traffic has been reported prior to 1860, but that area may have been explored also. Then in 1860, E. D. Pierce's Clearwater gold seekers tried to locate North Fork mineral values without success, but they found gold on Orofino Creek, not far away. As a result of Pierce's gold discoveries, a new army road grade brought an improved western Lolo Trail route into service in 1866-1867. A gold rush to Moose City at that time resulted in more extensive North Fork prospecting. Mining north of Pierce also extended into some North Fork streams, although those placers did not compare with Orofino Creek. When potential Northern Pacific Railway routes were being explored, a careful North Fork survey was made in 1874, but after mature consideration, another set of rivers was chosen to avoid a high Bitterroot summit and difficult canyons which made any Clearwater route less attractive. Three years later, however, General O. O. Howard's Lolo Trail Nez Perce campaign gained national attention.

After about forty years of mining, large scale commercial logging began to gain importance. A pioneer fire lookout constructed on Bertha Hill in 1905 marked an early effort for a cooperative state and lumber company Clearwater Timber Protective Association for fire detection that soon spread throughout western timberlands. North Fork log drives, prominent until Dworshak Reservoir interfered, have not left too much visible trace, but evidence of other logging practices--such as old rail lines, splash dams, flumes, and permanent company camps or towns--survive and in some cases continue in use. United States Forest Service operations became prominent in North Fork development after 1906.

5. Historical documentation and literature: An extensive Lolo

Trail literature--particularly relating to Lewis and Clark and General O. O. Howard's Nez Perce campaign--is available, and some attention has been paid to logging activities in this area. References aside from Nez Perce campaign items include:

Ralph W. Hidy, Frank Ernest Hill, and Allan Nevins, Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story (New York: MacMillan, 1963), 248-272, 512-533.

W. T. Jackson, Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-1869 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 312-318.

John J. Pebbles, Lewis and Clark Trail and Campsites in Idaho (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1966), 18-39.

Ralph S. Space, "The Race for Clearwater Timber," Idaho Yesterdays (Winter 1974), 17/4:2-5.

Ralph S. Space, Pioneer Timbermen: A History of the Rush to Acquire the White Pine Forests of the Clearwater Country in Idaho (Lewiston: Printcraft Printing, 1972).

6. Historic Sites Inventory:

Lolo Trail: This registered National Historic Landmark represents this region's primary history resource. Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce campaign use account for this route's major historic interest.

Montana Trail: This early Indian route qualifies for National Register designation as an aboriginal more than as an historic cultural resource, but it had historic traffic as well.

Canoe Camp: This Nez Perce National Historic Park component is eligible as an historic site of 1805, and is registered as park inventory. Nearby Dworshak Dam is an important engineering achievement.

Bertha Hill: This early lookout site (CTPA) has state historic sites review board approval for National Register identification, but new notification procedures require resubmission.

Brown's Rock: This location, strategic in Weyerhaeuser timberland development of that area, has state historic sites review board approval for National Register recognition, but also must be resubmitted.

Camp Howard: This Lolo Trail site is associated with General Howard's 1877 Nez Perce campaign.

Canyon Creek Ranger Station: This Clearwater National Forest administrative site retains historic, but not architectural or structural, interest.

Headquarters: A Potlatch company town, this community has importance in regional historic development but will be registered as an architectural and community planning inventory.

Bungalow: This Forest Service ranger station has been identified for National Register nomination and a form has been submitted this year.

Moose City: False gold rushes in 1868 and 1869 preceded a limited amount of Moose Creek mining. National Register resources here will be submitted as historical archaeology rather than historic inventory.

Elk River: A major lumber mill operated here (1910-1932) for almost a quarter-century after rail service commenced, but its removal in 1936 left logging operations more modest in scale. Forest Service activities retain their prominence, but potential National Register sites are architectural rather than historic inventory.

Isabella Landing: Although North Fork log drives were attempted farther upstream this landing was a practical upper base for log drives as well as a Potlatch forest camp. Other landings (mostly with a greater log volume) are under water in Dworshak reservoir.

Kelly Creek Ranger Station: This Forest Service administrative site is primarily of historic interest.

7. Industrial archaeological summary and engineering sites inventory: Surface indications of mining are available north of Pierce and around Moose City, and evidence of a variety of logging operations survives in several areas of North Fork timberlands. An important complex of Clearwater lookouts (CTPA and USFS) has been inventoried for National Register listing along with an adjacent group of Saint Joe lookouts. Logging railroad grades--many still in use have special importance in this area. An inventory of North Fork bridges is needed.

8. Architectural summary and inventory index: Log cabins and other timber structures should be inventoried, along with Forest Service architecture, some of which has been identified as

eligible for National Register recognition. Logging company structures--particularly in Headquarters--make up most non-Forest Service buildings of architectural interest.

9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Ahsahka (15')	1961	Indian Post Office	1966
Anthony Peak	1969	Junction Mtn.	1965
Bacon Peak	1963	Larch Butte	1965
Bathtub Mtn.	1969	Lean-to Point	1965
Boehl's Butte (15')	1936	Little Green Mtn.	1969
Bovill (15')	1961	Liz Butte	1966
Browns Rock	1969	Lookout Peak	1965
Buzzard Roost	1963	Mallard Peak	1963
Cayuse Junction	1966	Montana Peak	1969
Clarke Mtn.	1963	Monumental Buttes	1969
Cook Mtn.	1965	Moose Mtn.	1965
Dent	1969	Osier Ridge	1965
Elizabeth Lake	1963	Pole Mtn.	1963
Elk Butte	1969	Pot Mtn.	1965
Elk Creek Falls	1969	Rhodes Peak	1966
Elk River	1969	Scurvy Mtn.	1965
French Mtn.	1965	Sheep Mtn.	1963
Gorman Hill	1965	Simmons Peak (15')	1957
Grandmother Mtn.	1969	Snowy Summit	1966
Grangemont	1969	Straight Peak (15')	1960
Grice Ridge	1969	The Nub	1963
Headquarters (15')		Thompson Point	1969
Hemlock Butte	1966	Toboggan Ridge	1966
Holly Creek	1966	Weitas Butte	1966
Horseshoe Lake	1965	Widow Mtn.	1969

10. Cultural Resource Management Administration: A major share of North Fork cultural resource management responsibility has been assumed by Clearwater National Forest officials. Protection of Lolo Trail segments (a registered National Historic Landmark), of historically or architecturally significant Forest Service properties (such as Bungalow Ranger Station and other long-time installations), of some Moose City area mining era materials, and of architectural and historical archaeological values associated with lookout towers are particularly important. An increasing public interest in Lolo Trail access and interpretation, presents an unusual opportunity (as well as obligation) for active management programs. Nez Perce National Historical Park also has a management interest in this area. Canoe Camp, a Nez Perce National Historical Park site, has been affected so greatly by recent development as to require interpretation rather than preservation. Cooperation with Nez Perce Indian authorities in dealing with their historic and cultural resources is of major importance.

Most non-federal land is owned by lumber companies, primarily Potlatch Forests, Incorporated. Company participation in management of cultural resources is essential for coordinated coverage of this area. State lands also are prominent. Clearwater and Shoshone County officials also exercise planning jurisdiction. Absence of state highways limits federal and state highway planners to short segments serving Headquarters and Elk River. Both of those communities have significant cultural resources and should engage in coordinated preservation planning. A large Army Engineers' reservoir brings that agency into North Fork planning, but Bureau of Land Management lands are not represented there. Idaho's state historic preservation planning process provides for cooperation of federal, state, and local planning officials with non-governmental participants. Because this area's county and local government officials are widely separated geographically, and major non-governmental land holders are more distant yet, coordinated preservation planning will have to be done primarily by Forest Service and State Historic Preservation office staffs with public participation arranged to encourage representation of all concerned elements in this planning process.