

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - LOST RIVER

Number 625

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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: Flowing from high mountain sources through a fairly wide valley, Lost River has some forested slopes above a generally arid range country. Irrigated farming at lower elevation (around feet) supplements ranching farther up. Copper basin--a high mining and ranching area--provides an additional large opening in Idaho's highest ranges; Mount Borah (12,662') and several other peaks of more than 12,000 feet tower over Lost River's varied terrain. Access to Lost River and Salmon River around Challis is provided by valleys and passes that are not difficult to penetrate.

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: People have inhabited southern Idaho for fourteen thousand years or more. Until about eight thousand years ago they were noted primarily as big game hunters. Since then, they specialized more in camas, bitterroot, and other natural crops and seeds, as well as in smaller game. But they continued to hunt large game that remained after earlier elephants, camels, giant sloth, and other ice age creatures left as climatic conditions changed.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:

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:
9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Appendicitis Hill 1972	Herd Peak 1967
Arco Hills 1972	Horse Basin 1967
Arco North 1972	Inferno Cone 1972
Arco Pass 1969	Jerry Peak 1967
Arco South 1972	Leatherman Peak 1967
Borah Peak 1967	Mackay (15') 1960
Butte City 1972	Meridian Peak 1967
Chilly Buttes 1967	Methodist Creek 1969
Copper Basin (15') 1960	Muldoon Canyon (15') 1960
Darlington 1969	Nichols Reservoir 1972
Dickey Peak 1967	Phi Kappa Mtn. 1967
Elkhorn Creek 1967	Ramshorn Canyon 1969
Grays Peak 1967	Rock Roll Canyon 1967
Grouse (15') 1960	Ryan Peak 1967
Harry Canyon 1967	Standhope Peak 1967
Herd Lake 1967	

10. Cultural resource management recommendations:

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428