National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2026

4th of July Creek Mining Camp

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

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Introduction

Cultural Landscapes in the Cultural Resources Inventory System

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Inventory Unit Summary

Region:	Alaska
Park Name:	Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve
Park Code:	YUCH
Org Code:	9870
Resource Type:	Cultural Landscape
Resource Level:	Component Landscape
Inventory Status	Complete
Parent Resource ID:	100084
Parent Resource Name:	4th of July Creek Historic Mining District
Resource ID:	975392
Resource Name:	4th of July Creek Mining Camp
State/Territory:	Alaska

Landscape Description

CHR-080 is located along 4th of July Creek, a tributary of the Yukon River, within the boundaries of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in eastern interior Alaska. CHR-080 is one of several mining related sites located along the 4th of July Creek drainage. Historic mining activities along the drainage stretch from the Nation town site at the mouth of the creek upriver twenty-two miles and include cabins, caches, boilers, mining equipment, ditches, and placer mining waste piles. CHR-265, the 4th of July Creek Mining District, has been developed but has yet to be submitted for state or national recognition.

CHR-080 was by far the largest mining camp on the 4th of July drainage. It is a historic site that operated primarily between 1898 and 1943, but after World War II the site experienced further

activity until 1951. Thereafter it was used sporadically until the claims expired in the early 1980s and the land reverted to public domain.

CHR-080 is located 8 miles up-river from the mouth of 4th of July Creek, along the historic 4th of July Road (now impassable), that originates at the former site of Nation City and ends at CHR-080. The site is ¼ mile above the mouth of Ten Gulch on the west bank of 4th of July Creek. The site consists of two cabins, a blacksmith shop, a cabin ruin, an outhouse, a boiler, an abandoned 'donkey engine', a placer mining waste pile, an overgrown airstrip and a wide variety of mining and earth-moving equipment from various eras of development.

The remoteness of the site, 8 miles up the drainage along an impassable overgrown road, has resulted in little impact from visitors. The site is only accessible by helicopter and integrity at CHR-080 is present. The site maintains its integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association and setting. Historic character is perceivable as that of a classic placer gold mining camp due to the presence of original log buildings, a blacksmith shop, a wide assortment of mining equipment and placer mining waste piles. The site, while used in non-historic times, still maintains its historic integrity to an impressive degree, and through its varied collection of mining equipment provides the visitor with historical and modern examples of placer gold mining techniques, as well as insight into the lifestyles of the miners.

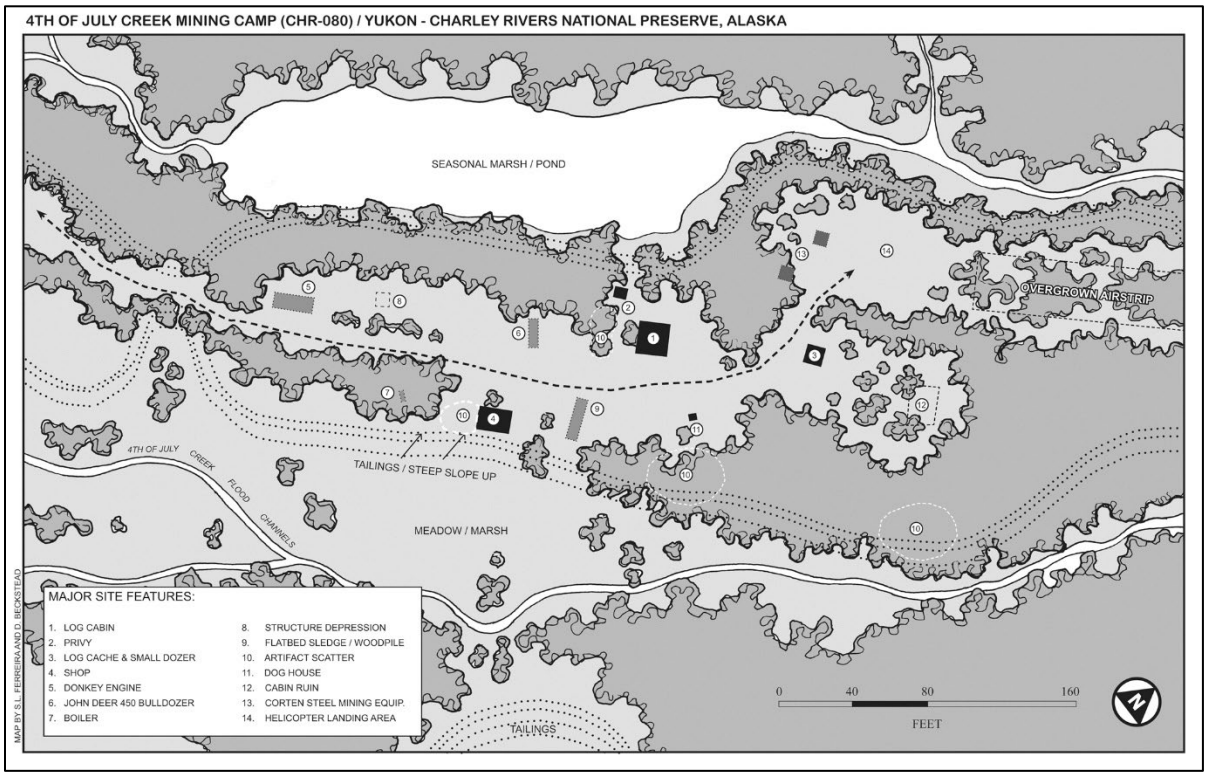
Landscape Hierarchy Description

The 4th of July Creek Mining Camp (CHR-080) is a component landscape of the 4th of July Creek Historic Mining District (CHR-265). Both are located on the 4th of July Creek drainage, a tributary of the Yukon River within the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska.

Landscape Type Name

Historic Site

Site Plan



4th of July Creek Mining Camp Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska 2006.

Other Names

Table of Other Names

Name	Type
July Creek Mining Company Camp	Historic
July Creek Placer Company Camp	Historic
4th of July Creek Mining Camp	Current

Concurrence Information

Park Superintendent Acknowledgement Date

09/11/2007

Park Superintendent Acknowledgement:

Yes

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative

Historical Landscape Architect S.L. Ferreira was made aware of the 4th of July Creek landscapes by Park Historian D. Beckstead. Field work was carried out in June of 2006. The draft CLI was completed in the winter of 2006/2007. The draft CLI was submitted to park and AK SHPO for review in 2007. Concurrence was obtained in 2007.

Revisions

Table of Revisions

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Authority	Revision Explanatory Narrative
Kelsey Mork	Change in Condition Change in Management Category	09/08/2025	Park Superintendent	The cultural landscape has not been visited by a HLA since the initial completion of this CLI in 2006. The condition is assumed to have degraded based on images provided by the Fire Management team from a site visit conducted by said team in 2020. This CLI update serves as a bridge between the last site visit in 2006 and next full update within the next five years. Another alteration to this CLI includes the change in management category from Category B to Category A to meet the requirements of those categories. The boundary description has changed to meet the standards of a CLI. Other minor alterations include the reformatting of the CLI into the new 2025 CLI layout, and the addition of pictures from the 2020 site visit.

Geographic Information

Area (Acres)

6

Land Tract Number(s)

N/A

Boundary Description

From Point A the boundary proceeds 400 feet southeast 104° to Point B. From Point B the boundary extends 144 feet south to Point C. From Point C the boundary follows the tailings 84 feet to Point D. At Point D the boundary continues to follow the tailings 118 feet to Point E and then 31 feet to Point F. At Point F the boundary continues southwest along the tailing piles 262 feet to Point G. From Point G the boundary angles 66 feet to Point H. At Point H the boundary proceeds 146 feet along the tailings to Point I. From Point I the boundary proceeds 48 feet to Point J and then 23 feet to Point K. At Point K the boundary begins to head 75 feet west to Point J. Point L is located 35 feet west of Point K. Point M is 65 feet to the west of Point L. The boundary proceeds 15 feet to point N and then it turns 65 feet northwest to Point O. The boundary proceeds 44 feet to Point P and then 35 feet northwest to Point Q. At Point Q the boundary extends 360 feet northeast to Point R. At Point R the boundary extends 40 feet northwest to Point S. From Point S the boundary curves further northwest 44 feet to Point T. The curve continues from Point T 35 feet to Point U and the 70 feet to Point V. From Point V the boundary curves in a northeasterly direct 108 feet to Point A.

Latitude/Longitude

Geometry	Latitude	Longitude	GeoDatum	Elevation (Meters)	Position Source	Position Accuracy	Date	Narrative
Point	65.135601	-141.984926	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2025	A
Point	65.13536	-141.92239	1983 NAD	—	GIS	Not Available	08/27/2025	B
Point	65.134819	-141.982975	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	C
Point	65.134659	-141.983638	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	D
Point	65.13461	-141.983807	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	E
Point	65.134203	-141.985202	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	F
Point	65.134066	-141.985488	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	G
Point	65.133801	-141.986155	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	H
Point	65.133734	-141.98638	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	I
Point	65.133727	-141.986985	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	J
Point	65.133764	-141.987186	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	K
Point	65.133867	-141.987517	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	L

Point	65.133894	-141.987568	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	M
Point	65.134061	-141.987581	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	N
Point	65.134173	-141.987485	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	O
Point	65.134269	-141.987368	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	P
Point	65.134901	-141.985583	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	Q
Point	65.134992	-141.985423	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	R
Point	65.13511	-141.985356	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	S
Point	65.135178	-141.985359	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	T
Point	65.135335	-141.985458	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	U
Point	65.135411	-141.985474	1983 NAD		GIS	Not Available	08/27/2024	V

Regional Landscape Contexts and Narratives

Physiographic

The Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is located in interior Alaska. The preserve encompasses 128 miles of the Yukon River, and all 106 miles of the Charley River. It also includes the 1.1 million acre watershed of the Charley River. The preserve consists of three regions: the North Ogilvie Mountains, the Yukon-Tanana Uplands, and the Yukon-Old Crow Basin. Over all, the area divides into 14 sub regions, including hills, lowlands, plains, river basins, valleys, and tundra. Other major rivers included in the preserve are Seventy Mile River, Kandik River, and Nation River. Fourth of July Creek heads approximately 12 miles south of the Yukon River and flows in a northeasterly direction for most of its length. It enters the Yukon approximately 50 miles downstream from Eagle, and 100 miles upstream from Circle. A major tributary, Crowley Creek, enters from the right, at roughly the halfway point.[1] Four miles from the Yukon, Fourth of July Creek leaves its valley and crosses a flat area until it empties into the Yukon behind an island several miles downstream from the Nation River (Beckstead Draft, 10).

Cultural

The earliest known cultural activity in the area involved the Han Athabaskan numbering about 500 in population. Although no villages or archeological sites occur, or have been documented, within the Fourth of July Creek Camp, the Han Athabaskan utilized the entire Yukon River Basin within the preserve for subsistence.

With the discovery of gold in the 1890s, miners began moving into the area. Miners started establishing small gold placer claims on Coal Creek, and smaller creeks, in 1901. After the initial rush, a few miners stayed to work the claims intermittently into the early 1930s. The remaining miners constructed log cabins, and one, Frank Slaven, opened a roadhouse at the confluence of Coal Creek and the Yukon River where riverboats and barges landed bringing supplies to the region. Most lived a subsistence lifestyle and stayed in the area for all seasons.

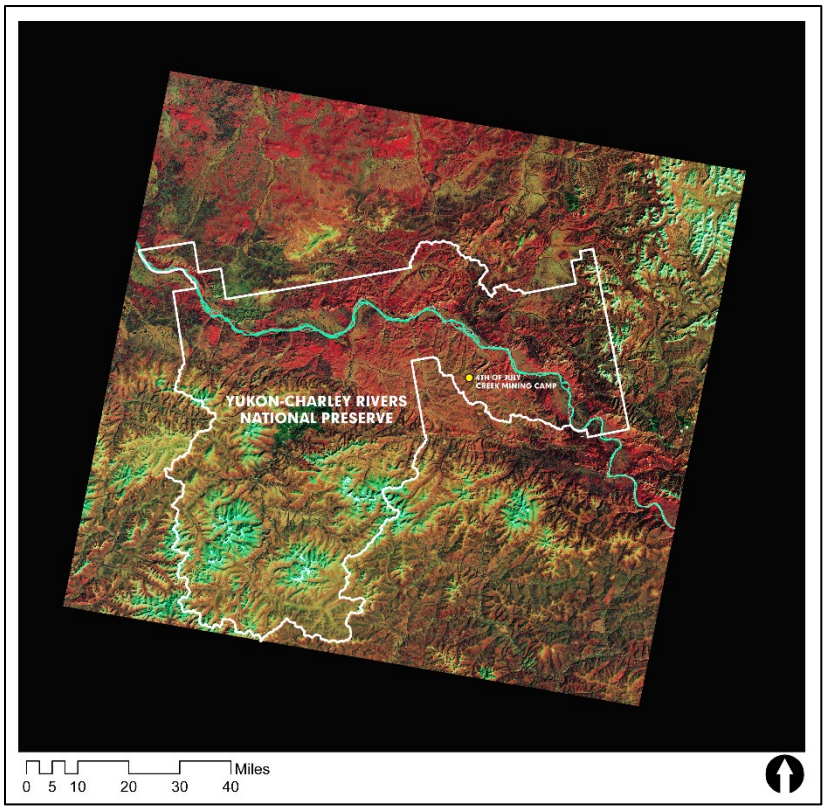
[1] In referring to directions on waterways, right and left sides, or limits, are given assuming the observer is facing downstream. However, when identifying the right or left fork of a waterway, the observer is facing upstream.

By 1935, Gold Placers Inc. purchased most of the small claims and began large-scale dredge mining operations on Coal Creek in 1936. The work crews consisted of local miners, trappers, and students from the university in Fairbanks. The season lasted between five and six months, so the majority of the crew only lived in the area at that time. A handful did remain in the region during the winter and engaged in subsistence hunting. After World War II, the company had a hard time finding skilled workers and took on several native men from Eagle Village. These men created their own camp for their families in the drainage where they stayed year round.

Political

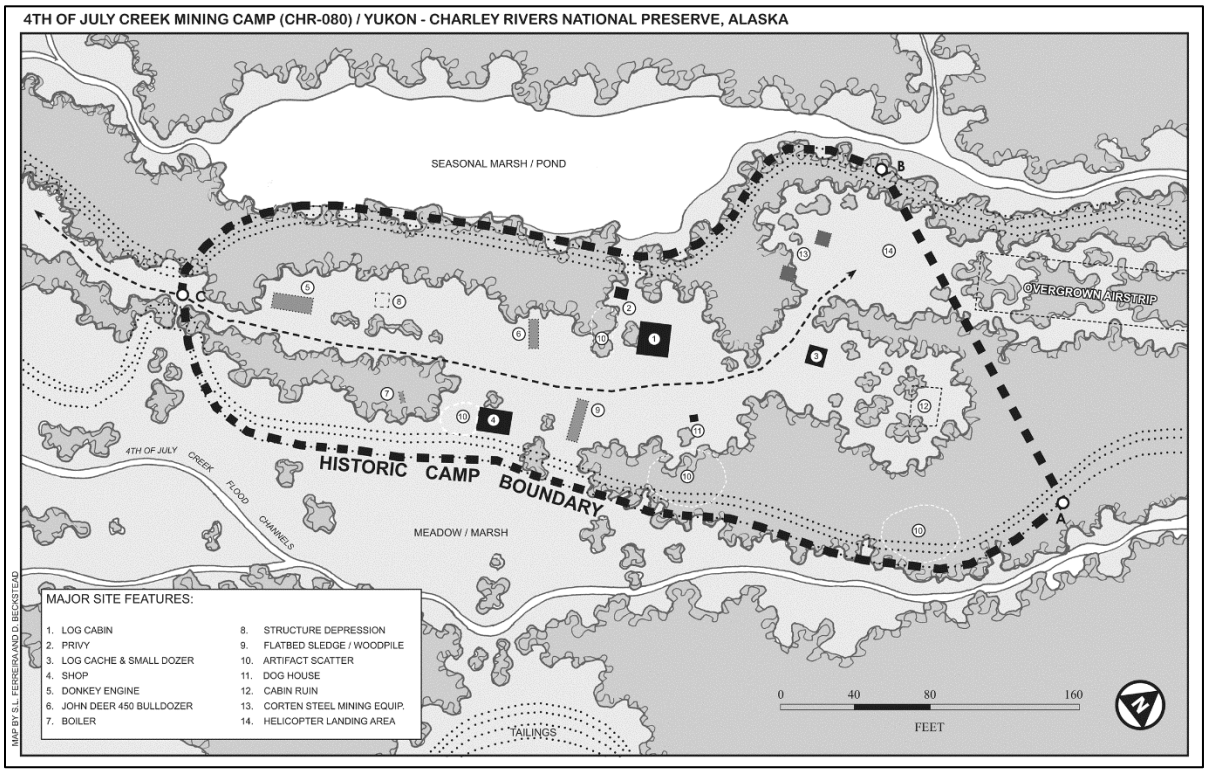
The Fourth of July Mining Camp lies within the Yukon-Koyukon US Census Division of Alaska. Nearby communities include Eagle, Eagle Village, Circle, and Central. Fairbanks area, the closest city and approximately a one-hour flight from the Coal Creek airstrip, has a population of about 100,000 people. The Han Athabaskans have a vested interest in the Fourth of July Mining Camp due to their ancestral relationship to the Yukon-Charley River basin.

Regional Landscape Context Graphics



4th of July Creek Mining Camp highlighted in yellow within the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve boundary, 2006.

Location Map Graphic Information



Boundary map for 4th of July Creek Mining Camp, 2006.

Counties and State

State/Territory

Alaska

County

Southeast Fairbanks Unorganized Borough (Census Area)

Management Information

Management Category

Category A (High NPS Priority for Preservation and Maintenance)

Management Category Date

TBD

Management Category Explanatory Narrative

To obtain management category For a cultural landscape to be considered Category A (High NPS Priority for Preservation and Maintenance) the inventory unit must meet any of the following criteria: the preservation of the inventory unit is specifically legislated; the inventory unit is related to the park's legislated significance; the inventory unit is nationally significant as defined by the National Historic Landmark criteria or contributes to the significance of a National Historic Landmark; the inventory unit is nationally significant as defined by the National Register criteria or contributes to the national significance of a property eligible for, or listed in, the National Register; the inventory unit it's a pre-contact archeological resource.

The Fourth of July Mining Camp is a mining site associated with the gold rush on the Yukon River which is discussed in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve enabling legislation, meeting the minimum requirements to be considered for Category A. Under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was established. The enabling legislation, signed into effect by President Jimmy Carter on December 1, 1978, states:

> The Yukon-Charley National Monument, an area in east-central Alaska, includes a combination of historic and scientific features of great significance. The Upper Yukon River basin contains historic remains of early mining activity, and includes outstanding paleontological resources and ecologically diverse natural resources, offering many opportunities for scientific and historic study and research.

Management Agreements

Table of Management Agreements

Management Agreement	Other Management Agreement	Management Agreement Expiration Date	Management Agreement Narrative
N/A			

Legal Interests

Table of Legal Interests

Legal Interest Type	Fee Simple Reservation Expiration Date	Other Organization/ Agency	Legal Interest Narrative
Fee Simple			

Wilderness Status

Located in Managed Wilderness?

No

Adjacent Lands Integrity Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?

No – Adjacent lands do not contribute to the inventory unit's significance.

Narrative

N/A

Adjacent Lands Graphic

N/A

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Eligibility

Eligible – SHPO/THPO Consensus Determination

Eligibility Date

09/21/2007

Significance Level

Local

Contributing

Contributing

Classification

Site

Documentation Narrative Description

This Cultural Landscape Inventory was completed in 2007 and was the first consensus Determination of Eligibility for this site. As of 2025, a National Register Nomination has not been completed for this site.

Pre-CLI Documentation Status

Undocumented

CLI SHPO/THPO Concurrence Date

09/21/2007

CLI SHPO/THPO Concurrence Narrative

n/a

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places

The 4th of July Creek Mining Camp is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for association with regional gold mining and Criterion D for information potential. The period of significance for 4th of July Creek Mining Camp is 189 to 1951, and the level of significance is local.

CRITERION A

Industry

The 4th of July Creek Mining Camp is eligible under Criterion A because it is classic example of an early 20th century hydraulic gold placer mining camp of the upper Yukon River region of Alaska. Although the drainage was not the scene of a major gold rush, it was a leader in gold production in the region until 1936. Except for a brief hiatus from 1943 to 1945, the 4th of July Creek Mine was continuously worked from 1898 until the early 1980s by both individual prospectors and corporate mining ventures. The mining camp contains evidence of both small scale and large-scale placer mining techniques, as well as a wide variety of historic and non-historic artifacts making it a unique site for interpretive purposes. Cabins, caches, abandoned mining equipment, ditches, tailings piles and waste dumps are scattered throughout the site and remain as interpretive resources which enable one to reconstruct the lifestyles and processes of an early to mid-twentieth century hydraulic placer mining camp.

CRITERION D

The site is eligible under Criterion D because the extensive material culture present provides information regarding placer mining practices and domestic lifestyles in the region during the early 20th century. The abundance of material culture at the site, combined with the integrity of its artifacts (site has not been pillaged) provides a unique research data set to answer specific questions concerning mining technology development, commodity flows in interior Alaska, and basic reconstruction of past lifestyles of occupants through examination of domestic remains.

Even though the camp experienced activity into the 1980s, its historic character remains particularly well preserved due to its remote location. The camp contains artifacts form all its major eras of development, and collectively its various features display integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association and setting.

National Register Significance Criteria

Significance Criterion A (Event)

Significance Criterion D (Information Potential)

National Register Criteria Considerations

N/A

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes)

Table of National Register Periods of Significance

Start Year/Era and End Year/Era	Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
1898 CE to 1951 CE	Developing the American Economy	Extraction or Mining Industries	Other Metals and Minerals	—

National Register Areas of Significance

Table of National Register Areas of Significance

Category	Subcategory	Narrative
Industry	—	—

National Register Information System

Table of NRIS Information

NRIS Name	NRIS ID	NRIS URL	Other Name	Primary Certification Date
N/A	—	—	—	—

State Register Documentation

Table of State Register Documentation

Identification Number	Name	Listed Date	Narrative
CHR-00392	Fourth of July Creek Mining Camp Privy	03/27/2003	
CHR-00391	Fourth of July Creek Camp Cabin	03/27/2008	
CHR-00390	Fourth of July Creek Camp Cabin Ruin	03/27/2008	
CHR-00389	Structure Depression	03/27/2008	
CHR-00387	1940S Era Bulldozer	03/27/2008	
CHR-00386	Flatbed Sledge	03/27/2008	
CHR-00385	Small Boiler	03/27/2008	

Identification Number	Name	Listed Date	Narrative
CHR-00384	Fourth of July Creek Mining Camp Donkey Engine	03/27/2008	
CHR-00383	Dog House	03/27/2008	
CHR-00382	Blacksmith Shop	03/27/2008	
CHR-00381	Raised Log Cache	03/27/2008	
CHR-00080	July Creek Mining Company Camp Cultural Landscape (July Creek Mine Complex)	03/27/2008	

National Historic Landmark

Table of National Historic Landmark Information

Status	Theme	Contributing	NRIS ID	NHL URL	Date
No	—	—	—	—	—

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark

N/A

World Heritage Site

Table of World Heritage Site Information

Status	Category	WHS Name	WHS URL	Date	WHS Status Narrative
No	—	—	—	—	—

National Natural Landmark

Is Resource within a Designated National Natural Landmark?

No

Chronology & Physical History

Chronology

Major Event	Major Event Narrative	Start Year	Start Era	End Year	End Era	Circa Date
Explored	Dan Crowley stakes first claim and names drainage Crowley Creek (Beckstead, 2005: 10).	1898	CE	1898	CE	
Exploited	Prospectors from Fortymile River and Circle City rush to the drainage and stake over 100 claims during July and August. Miners rename main drainage 4th of July Creek for the day the discovery claim was staked. The name of the south fork of the drainage is maintained in homage to Crowley (Beckstead, 2005:11).	1898	CE	1898	CE	—
Rehabilitated	Miners utilize old trail to reach gold bearing placers some eight miles up the drainage (Kain, 1994).	1898	CE	1902	CE	
Abandoned	Most men leave 4th of July Creek for Nome or Tanana gold fields. Many of these men sell their claims to James Taylor (Grauman, 1977: 339; Beckstead, 2005: 12).	1902	CE	1902	CE	
Abandoned	By this time only 10 men were left working claims in the drainage (Beckstead, 2005: 12).	1904	CE	1904	CE	
Mined	First reports of hydraulic mining on creek. An automatic "boomer-type" dam is utilized (Brooks, 1911: 172).	1906	CE	1906	CE	
Land Transfer	James Taylor consolidates majority of paying claims on 4th of July Creek (Kain, 1994; Beckstead, 2005: 12).	1910	CE	1910	CE	
Mined	86-horsepower Bagley steam scraper (Donkey Engine), the first piece of machinery on the drainage, is imported by Taylor. (Beckstead, 2005: 13). It was also reported to have powered a sawmill at or near CHR-080 (Grauman, 1977: 339).	1911	CE	1911	CE	
Exploited	Plans laid to change from open-cut mining methods to hydraulic (Ducker, 1983: 135-136; Beckstead, 2005: 13).	1915	CE	1915	CE	
Damaged	Value of gold falls as cost of materials rises and WW I causes a labor shortage (Webb, 1985: 283).	1917	CE	1917	CE	
Developed	Taylor, B. D. Vanderveer and Paul Rhodius form the July Creek Mining Company (JCMC)(Beckstead, 2005: 13).	1919	CE	1919	CE	
Colonized	Taylor leaves the company after disputes with his partners over money (Beckstead, 2005: 13).	1921	CE	1921	CE	
Purchased/Sold	Remaining partners change name of company to July Creek Placer Company. George Matlock becomes resident agent of JCPC and builds ditch to divert water from Washington Creek. The ditch is a failure and only flows during periods of high water (Grauman, 1977:348).	1922	CE	1922	CE	

Major Event	Major Event Narrative	Start Year	Start Era	End Year	End Era	Circa Date
Purchased/Sold	JCPC options 4th of July Creek claims to Casper Ellingen with the stipulation that a dredge be installed (Beckstead, 2005: 14).	1925	CE	1925	CE	
Damaged	Ellingen fails to install dredge and JCPC sells its interests to Richard Bauer (Hunt, 1989: 510).	1929	CE	1929	CE	
Stabilized	Gold prices artificially raised by government from $20.67 to $35 per ounce (Beckstead, 2005: 14).	1934	CE	1934	CE	
Mined	Bauer's operation is largest mining operation in Eagle District with six men. They utilized simple hydraulic or open-cut methods (Beckstead, 2005: 14; Smith, 1937: 44).	1934	CE	1934	CE	
Land Transfer	Bauer sells claims back to Ellingen. Ellingen works claims until 1945 (Smith, 1941: 54).	1937	CE	1937	CE	
Abandoned	War Production Board issues Order L-208 halting all non-essential mining operations during the war (Kain, 1994; Beckstead, 2005: 19).	1942	CE	1942	CE	
Land Transfer	Yukon Placers purchases the claims to become the biggest operation in the Eagle district until 1950. (Kain, 1994; Grauman, 1977: 337).	1947	CE	1947	CE	
Established	The airstrip at 4th of July Mining Camp was most likely built sometime during this period.	1951	CE	1951	CE	Yes
Established	Yukon Placers builds an eight mile access road to claims from Yukon River (Grauman, 1977: 337; NPS, 1988: 42).	1948	CE	1948	CE	
Exploited	Bulldozer is utilized for first time in mining operations to scrape along stream and build up waste piles (Beckstead, 2005: 14; USBM, 1950: 1362-63; USBM, 1951: 1380).	1949	CE	1949	CE	
Abandoned	Last year of operation for Yukon Placers due to high production costs (NPS, 1988: 42; USBM, 1952: 1402).	1951	CE	1951	CE	
Abandoned	The White Pass & Yukon Company discontinues riverboat service on the Yukon River (NPS, 1988: 99).	1954	CE	1954	CE	
Mined	James R. Layman and son Dennis stake new claims on 4th of July Creek and sporadically mine in the area around CHR-080 until 1985. They utilize two bulldozers, a backhoe and a small washplant (NPS, 1988: 42).	1964	CE	1964	CE	
Conserved	Melody Grauman surveys the 4th of July Mining Camp for an Historic Resource Study of the proposed Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve (Grauman, 1977)	1976	CE	1976	CE	
Conserved	Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is established.	1980	CE	1980	CE	
Mined	The Laymans take a small John Deer tractor (JD-450) up the 4th of July Creek road. This was the last time the road was put to use in suppport of mining operations at the CHR-080 (Beckstead, 2005: 15).	1982	CE	1982	CE	

Major Event	Major Event Narrative	Start Year	Start Era	End Year	End Era	Circa Date
Conserved	Site visited by B. Goebels as part of YUCH Cabin Survey (Geobels, 1983).	1983	CE	1983	CE	
Conserved	Site is surveyed as part of the region wide Mining Inventory and Monitoring Project (Worthington, et al, 1986).	1986	CE	1986	CE	
Land Transfer	Layman's claims revert to public domain (Beckstead, 2005: 15)	1990	CE	1990	CE	
Conserved	D. Singer surveys cabins at 4th of July Mining Camp (Singer, 1996).	1995	CE	1995	CE	
Conserved	David Koschak visits site as part of a preserve-wide cabin survey for fire management (Koschak, 2002).	2002	CE	2002	CE	
Conserved	Mary Ann Sweeney surveyed the site and prepared a draft determination of eligibility form (Sweeney, 2004).	2003	CE	2003	CE	
Conserved	D. Beckstead, S.L. Ferreira and Firepro personal visit site for landscape reconnaissance and brush removal (Ferreira, 2006).	2006	CE	2006	CE	

Physical History

Physical History Time Periods, Narratives, and Graphics

GENERAL HISTORY OF MINING ON THE YUKON RIVER

Europeans are not known to have visited the area encompassed by the preserve until 1851 when Robert Campbell, a fur trader employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, made a four-day trip from Fort Selkirk down the Yukon River to Fort Yukon.

American members of the Western Union Telegraph Exploration Expedition passed through the upper Yukon area in 1869. Other visitors included the French-Canadian traders Francois and Moise Mercier, and gold miners-turned-traders Jack McQuestern, Arthur Harper, and Jack Mayo, who traded regularly with the Han Athapaskans of the upper Yukon. Francois Mercier constructed a trade cabin at David's Village, 12 miles upriver from the present day preserve. As late as 1874, few European Americans lived or had even traveled in the upper Yukon Region.

The discovery of gold changed all of that. While there are vague reports of gold being discovered on "Preacher Creek" as early as 1863, it was not until the 1880s that mining on any measurable scale took place. In those years miners prospected the Fortymile and Stewart rivers (1882), the

American and Seventy-Mile rivers (1882) and Birch Creek (1893). Using small-scale hand mining equipment- usually a gold pan, shovel, and sluice boxes- these miners reportedly took $100,000 worth of gold from the Stewart River District in 1885-1887. Mines on the Fortymile River are said to have produced $60,000 in 1886. George Carmack's discovery of gold on Bonanza Creek in the Canadian Klondike in the summer of 1896 brought thousands of fortune seekers to the region and changed the course of history.

The prospectors who braved the dangers of the Chilkoot and White passes arrived in the Canadian Klondike only to find the most promising streams had long-since been staked. So some of the miners struck out in all directions to find their own claim. Heavy Canadian taxes caused a considerable number to gravitate to the streams and valleys on the American side for the border. As the gold seekers rushed from one reported strike to another, they explored, prospected, and staked every stream and valley along the Yukon, including those in the present-day Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. It is a curious geological condition that only streams that enter the Yukon River from the south bear gold. By 1896, Fourth of July Creek and Seventymile River had been staked. There were reports of discoveries on Coal and Woodchopper creeks, but neither creek would be worked for several more years. Coal was discovered along Bonanza, Coal, and Washington creeks, and on the Nation River. Coal was an essential to fuel for steamboats, which also relied on supplies of locally cut firewood, as well as for stream boilers for melting permafrost ground.

Within a short period of time, gold camps were constructed. Nation City, located near the mouth of Fourth of July Creek, and Ivy City, situated below the mouth of the Nation Reef Slough, were built because of good prospecting reports at Fourth of July Creek. The settlement of Independence consisted of eight to ten cabins at the mouth of the Charley River in 1898. During that same year, miners also laid out the short-lived town of Derwent, near the mouth of the Charley River. Seventymile City and Star City grew out of a strike on the Seventymile River. And Circle City, which had been started earlier 30 miles down the Yukon River, was quickly repopulated to become, once again, "the Paris of Alaska." The boom town of Eagle City, which grew out of a strike on American Creek in 1898, had a population of almost 1,700. Eagle residents voted in 1900 to become the first incorporated city in the interior of Alaska. Eagle became the seat of Alaska's judicial district, and its port-of-entry from interior Canada. Fort Egbert was built at

Eagle and served as the U.S. Army's district headquarters. Across the Canadian border was Dawson City, which was the largest city north of San Francisco by 1898.

The rapid influx of people to the upper Yukon created a vastly increased demand for food and supplies in the interior. A river transportation system developed, but in the early days of the gold rush the steamboats sometimes experienced considerable difficulty in meeting the demand for supplies. Miners in Circle once used armed force to take food from passing steamboats. In the autumn of 1897, the U.S. Congress responded to reports of hardships by purchasing and importing 529 domesticated reindeer, used to haul freight and as a meat source, from Lapland for food. Only 144 reindeer survived the journey to Circle City. By the time they arrived in May of 1899, the crisis had passed, and the reindeer were no longer needed. By 1898 to 1899, some 100 steamboats plied the Yukon River, providing an adequate flow of food and supplies during the summer season.

During the eight or more months when ice prevented riverboat travel, dog teams traveled the 160-mile Circle to Eagle trail and carried mail and supplies to the people living in the isolated camps and cabins along the Yukon and its tributaries. A number of roadhouses were built to accommodate the needs of travelers. Some of those old roadhouses are still standing.

The people who journeyed into the Upper Yukon at the turn of this century moved back and forth across feeder streams and gulches at a frenzied pace, motivated by each new rumor of gold discovery. Then, almost as quickly as it began, the gold rush in the Yukon passed. Rumors of richer finds elsewhere drew people away which included reports of fortunes to be made in Nome in 1899, and new finds on the Tanana River in 1902. In less than four years all of the small communities on the American side of the border, expect Eagle and Circle, had all but disappeared, and the population of those two communities dwindled.

Not all of the people who had immigrated into the upper Yukon followed the siren's song of unimaginable wealth to be found on the other rivers or at Nome. A few determined men and women remained on the streams that feed the Yukon River. In 1901, for example, John C. Boyle filed claims on Mineral and Iron Creeks. Frank Slaven, who first came into the country during the

Klondike Gold Rush, staked his Discovery claim on Coal Creek in 1905. A Dr. Pratt discovered gold on Surprise Creek in 1907.

The people who stayed experienced some success. In 1906, as much as $18,000 worth of gold was produced from Mineral Creek, a tributary of Woodchopper Creek. Total gold production of the region between 1904 and 1911 was reportedly $150,000 with most of that coming from Mineral and Fourth of July Creeks. Two men mined intermittently, between 1905 and 1934, using drifts and open cut methods just below Boulder Creek, a small tributary of Coal Creek. They worked approximately 50,000 square feet of gravel and recovered $35,000 worth of gold. Frank Slaven reportedly recovered nearly as much by processing about half the amount of gravel on his claim in the years before 1914.

Most of the miners who stayed worked a small area by a variety of methods and found enough gold to tie them to the land. The meager amounts of gold that came from the streams had to be supplemented with income that came from activities such as trapping, cutting wood for the steamships that operated on the Yukon, carrying the mail, or operating a roadhouse.

The distribution of gold in the drainages of the south side of the Yukon River was often so irregular that the gravel in which it was found was worth only pennies a yard. In some place, miners had to process as much as 70 to 80 cubic yards of gravel to extract a single troy ounce of gold at Coal Creek. The gravel lay beneath a layer of frozen mud, silt, decayed organic matter, that could be as much as 28 feet deep. A profitable operation required the ability to process and recover gold from massive amounts of gravel. In 1920, a miner named Taylor attempted, with some success, to overcome this problem by consolidating claims on Fourth of July Creek and bringing in a Bagley Scraper from the states. Short lived attempts were made to conduct mining on Coal Creek using large-scale equipment in 1924 and 1927 to 1928. However, most miners possessed neither the technical knowledge nor the financial backing to acquire the enormous amounts of food and supplies, hire large crews, and transport hundreds of tons of equipment to the remote upper Yukon.

In 1934, Ernest Patty, a mining engineer and future president of the University of Alaska and General A.D. McRae a Canadian financier conducted an extensive sampling program at Coal Creek. On the basis of the results of this testing, they concluded that gold mining could be carried on profitably by dredge on Coal and Woodchopper creeks. They purchased the rights to existing claims on both creeks, constructed camps, imported a dredge with four cubic-foot capacity buckets from San Francisco. The dredge cost $105,929.04, including $27,000 in shipping fees. Patty and McRae began dredging operations on Coal Creek in 1935 and on Woodchopper Creek in 1937. Records of the operation on Woodchopper Creek, known as Alluvial Golds, Inc., and on Coal Creek, Gold Placers, Inc., prove they were correct in their assessment that largescale placer mining could be carried out profitably. Between 1935 and 1940, the two companies recovered 33,758 ounces of gold and 3,667 ounces of silver, valued at $1,183,585.70, from Coal Creek.

In October of 1942, the federal government closed gold mining operations in order to release men and equipment for the war effort. Most of the gold mines in Alaska closed. Placer mining resumed in the upper Yukon region including the dredge operations on Woodchopper and Coal creeks immediately after the end of World War II. In 1945, gold worth $123, 130.49 was recovered from Coal Creek. During the following year, Woodchopper Creek was the third highest placer gold producer in the territory. In 1948, Yukon Placers built a road to its claims on Fourth of July Creek and brought in heavy equipment. The company processed 70,000 cubic yards of gravel by hydraulic methods in 1949, recovering 1,372 ounces of gold and silver.

Although gold mining continued in the upper Yukon region into the 1950s, the trend was one of decline. Increases in the cost of supplies and labor in the postwar years and weakening paystreaks on some streams such as Coal Creek, combined to narrow the profit margin of the operators. For example, Gold Placers, Inc. recovered gold worth $136,825.00 from Coal Creek in 1946, but reported a profit of only $2,804.90. In 1954 the White Pass and Yukon Company discontinued steamboat freight service on the Yukon River. This forced operators to depend on air transportation, which dramatically increased shipping costs on supplies and equipment.

The Coal Creek dredge did not operate in 1952, and Gold Placers, Inc. closed its operation permanently in 1957. Tedd C. Mathews, a Fairbanks mining engineer, leased to Coal and Woodchopper creek properties. However, he was unable to turn a profit working on

Woodchopper Creek in 1971. A succession of operators worked the claims on Coal Creek, including Ernest Wolfe and several partners (1972-1976), Au Placers, Inc. (1976-1977), Lomerson Ltd. (1977-1985), and Coal Creek Properties (1985-1986). All of these operators had difficulty making a profit because of high production costs. The Coal Creek dredge was last operated for a short time in mid-1970s (Excerpt from NPS 1988, 95-100).

FOURTH OF JULY CREEK

In the spring of 1886, prospectors made the first discovery of gold on the Fortymile River (GMP 37). In 1887, records show 500 stampeders cross the Chilkoot Trail in Dyea headed for the Fortymile River (Hunt 1989, chapter 14). The following year, gold is discovered in Circle City, causing a rush of 1,000 men to travel over the Chilkoot Trail for the Yukon Region. Ten years later, Dan Crowley makes the discovery claim on an unnamed creek, which he names Crowley Creek (Beckstead 2005, 10). Prospectors from Fortymile River and neighboring creeks rush to the drainage and stake claims during July and August. They rename the drainage Fourth of July Creek after the day the first claim was staked (Beckstead 2005, 11).

Two small towns, Nation and Ivey City, developed near the mouth of Fourth of July Creek in 1898. The town of Nation, named by Dora Dixon, grew to a dozen cabins, a small store, and a roadhouse that served as the post office (NPS 1982, 12; Allan 2025, 4). A dock was constructed for the steamships traveling down the Yukon River with supplies. Prospectors formed a trail from Nation up the drainage to the mining claims (Grauman 1977, 173). The first winter, most of the miners left and only eight cabins were built along the drainage. By 1900 the stampede to the drainage had ended with 100 claims staked (Ibid, 86).

Gold was discovered in 1900 in Nome, inspiring many of the remaining 50 miners to leave the drainage for the gold fields. The prospectors who left sold their claims to miner James Taylor (Ibid, 339, 348; Beckstead 2005, 12). Records show just 10 men to be working claims along Fourth of July Creek in 1904 (Beckstead 2005, 12). That same year, the trail to the mines from Nation was widened and bridges were constructed for wagon use (Grauman 1977, 173). Despite issues with water flow in the drainage and the decreased number of miners, in 1905 an estimated $30,000 was made off the creek. That number drastically decreased the following year when a dozen miners made just $6,000 (Hunt 1990, Chapter 15).

During the winter of 1906, 11 miners worked four claims, increasing to 12 miners and five claims that summer (Brooks 1911, 172). Prospectors utilized drift and open-cut mining techniques to extract gold from the creek bed. By 1910, James Taylor merged the majority of the claims on the creek (Beckstead 2005, 13). He excavated a trench to supply water to the claims (Allan 2014, 1). Taylor then began using a "splash-dam" system, the process of damming the stream which could then be released to flood the area and carry away layers of gravel and topsoil exposing the rich ground below (Allan 2014,1).

In 1911, Taylor imported the first piece of machinery into the drainage, an 86-horsepower Bagley steam scraper (steam donkey) (Beckstead 2005, 13). A steam donkey is "a kind of traction engine designed to haul heavy weights with steel cables pulled by powerful winches mounted on the front of the machine" (Allan 2014). Taylor planned to use the steam donkey to excavate gold-rich gravel and move it to his sluice box operation (Allan 2014). It was also reported to have powered a sawmill at or near the mining claims (Grauman 1977, 339).

Plans to shift from open-cut mining to hydraulic mining developed in 1915 (Ducker 1983, 135-136; Beckstead 2005, 13). In 1919, Taylor formed the July Creek Mining Company (JMC) with B.D. Vanderveer and Paul Rhodius from Sedro-Wooley, Washington (Beckstead 2005, 13). Taylor left the company in either 1920 or 1921, after disputes with his partners over money (Beckstead 2005, 13; Hunt 1989, Chapter 15). The remaining partners change the name of the company to July Creek Placer Company (JCPC) the following year and hired A.D. Reynolds as the new resident manager (Hunt 1989, Chapter 15). Reynolds left after two years, and the company hired George Matlock. Matlock built a ditch to divert water from Washington Creek to Fourth of July Creek to aid in the mining process. The nine-mile ditch failed since it was dug over a porous rock base allowing water to only flow during storms, when Fourth of July Creek did not need it (Grauman 1977, 191, 348). During this time, the company constructed a cabin, privy, raised cache, blacksmith shop, and a doghouse.

In 1925, JCPC optioned the Fourth of July Creek claims to Casper Ellingen with the stipulation that a dredge be installed on the creek (Beckstead 2005, 14). Ellingen failed to install the dredge be install the dredge and JCPC sold its interests to Richard Bauer in 1929 (Hunt 1989, 510). Bauer

managed to turn the mining site into the largest operation in the district. He maintained a crew of four to five men over the next seven years operating three hydraulic nozzles to seep water into sluice boxes. In order to accomplish this, Bauer dug a 2.5-mile trench along the eastern side of the valley (Hunt 1989, Chapter 15).

According to the Mineral Resources of Alaska, 1939 report, Casper Ellingen was once again running the mine at Fourth of July Creek; it was still reported to be the largest outfit in the Eagle district (54). This success was halted when the War Production Board issued Order L-208 stopping all non-essential mining operations during World War II (Kain 1994; Beckstead 2005, 19). In 1947, Elligen sold the claims to Yukon Placers, who continued to maintain the mine as the biggest operation in the Eagle district until 1950 (Kain 1994; Grauman 1977, 337). Yukon Placers improved the road from Nation by widening it and raising it high enough to keep it dry in the summer (Graumann 1977, 173). An airstrip was developed during this period. Yukon Placers also brought in the first bulldozers to the site in 1949 to scrape along the stream and build up tailing piles (Beckstead 2005, 14; USBM 1950, 1362-63; USBM 1951, 1380).

Despite the improvements to the mining process at the site, Yukon Placers shut down operations in 1951 due to high production costs (NPS 1988, 42; USBM 1952, 1402). The next recorded mining at the site occurred in 1964 when father and son duo, James R. and Dennis Layman, staked new claims on Fourth of July Creek. They sporadically mined in the area until 1985 utilizing two bulldozers, a backhoe, and a small washplant for their operation (NPS 1988; 42). The Layman's claims reverted to the public domain in 1990, becoming part of the preserve (Beckstead 2005; 15).

In 1976, Melody Grauman conducted a Historic Resource Study of the proposed Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, which included the Fourth of July Mining Camp. Grauman records the road is still passable (173); and that there are tailing piles, pipes, and pumps scattered around the creek. She also records that a shed, fallen house, and bunkhouse remain, as well as three more foundations (191). In 1982, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is established. The following year the mining camp was visited by B. Geobels as part of a region wide Mining Inventory and Monitoring Project (Worthington, et al, 1986). The site has been documented and surveyed in

1995, 2002, 2003, and in 2006 by Samson Ferreira, Douglas Beckstead, and Firepro personnel for this Cultural Landscape Inventory.

Due to budgetary issues, staffing, and general logistics of visiting this site, the cultural landscape has not been visited by a Historical Landscape Architect since the initial completion of this CLI in 2006. The condition is assumed to have degraded based on images provided by the Fire Management team from a site visit conducted by said team in 2020. This CLI update serves as a bridge between the last site visit in 2006 and next full update within the next five years.

Uses

Functions and Uses

Table of Functions and Uses

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic Use	Current Use	Primary Use
Domestic (Residential)	Camp	—	Yes	No	Yes
Industrial/Processing/ Extract	Extractive Facility (Mining)	Mine	Yes	No	Yes
Vacant (Not in Use)	Abandoned/ Unmaintained	—	No	Yes	Yes

Public Access

Public Access

Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative

Though there are no park restrictions to visiting 4th of July Creek, physical access to the site is hard without helicopter transport.

Associated Ethnographic Groups

Ethnographic Study Status

No survey conducted

Analysis & Evaluation

Analysis and Evaluation Summary

The landscape characteristics represented at the 4th of July Mining Camp (CHR-080) include topography, buildings and structures, small scale features, and archeological sites.

Topography is a contributing characteristic because the entire camp was built upon the waste piles of the placer mining process, which raises the camp above the otherwise densely vegetated, largely palustrine valley bottom and provided a solid platform for camp construction. The presence of these piles (which could also be characterized as structures) supports integrity of location, feeling, association, design and materials at the site.

Buildings and structures on site support integrity of setting, feeling, association, materials and design. The log cabin, the outhouse, the raised log cache, the dog house and the blacksmith shop in particular, provide a sense of historical function and regionalism that articulate clearly to the observer that this was an Alaskan placer mining camp, used to support both mining and subsistence activities on a year-round basis.

There is a wide variety of small scale features at the site as well, consisting of artifacts associated with placer mining and camp operations, such as Corten-steel sluice boxes, a ‘donkey engine’, a boiler, piles of hydraulic pipe, various hand tools, a snow machine and two bulldozers. All of these features, even though some are non-historic, suggest to the observer that the camp clearly supported placer mining operations of various eras. The historic small scale features support integrity of setting, feeling and association.

The site is also the repository of a wide range of domestic and mining related artifacts. Can and refuse dumps, as well as piles of discarded equipment suggest many years of use as a domestic camp supportive of mining operations and subsistence activities. Foundation and cabin remains also suggest historical archeology has an important role to play in interpreting the function and spatial organization of the historic landscape of CHR-080

Landscape Characteristics and Features

Archeological Sites

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions: CHR-080 contains a wide range of domestic and mining related artifacts. Can and refuse dumps, as well as piles of discarded equipment (Feature 10) suggest many years of use as a domestic camp supportive of mining operations and subsistence activities. Foundation and cabin remains also suggest historical archeology has an important role to play in interpreting the function and spatial organization of the historic landscape. Feature 10 identifies four major repositories of domestic and mining related artifacts. These deposits promise to reveal information concerning placer mining practices and domestic lifestyles in the region during the early 20th century. Integrity is present at all known artifact concentrations, as they remain undisturbed.

Fire crews preformed cyclic fuels management in 2020 and captured images of the major structures at the site. The main focus was clearing and photographs were not taken of the archeology or other smaller features within the camp. The state of archeology within the site will need to be assessed in the next update.

Typical equipment pile located next to the log cabin (NPS 2006).

Ruin of a historic cabin with a basement or cellar (NPS 2006).

The domestic scatter located in the basement or cellar of the historic cabin ruins (NPS 2006).

Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures on the site support integrity of setting, feeling, association, materials and design. The log cabin (Feature 1), the privy (Feature 2), the raised cache (Feature 3), the dog house (Feature 11) and the blacksmith shop (Feature 4) in particular, provide a sense of historical function and regionalism that articulate clearly to observer that this was an Alaskan placer mining camp, used to support both mining and subsistence activities on a year-round basis.

Log Cabin (HS-35056)

The log cabin was built sometime between 1920 and 1930. The 16' x 18' rectangular structure is constructed from spruce logs with dorsal saddle notching and moss and thin board chinking. The north wall is 6'8" tall, 17'11" long and consists of eight logs. The east wall is 16' 1" long, 6' 8" tall with a 10' tall gable and is constructed from 13 logs. The south wall is 18'1" long, 6'8" tall and has nine logs. The west wall is 16' 3" long, 6' 8" tall with a 10' tall gable. An earthen berm insulates the north, south and west walls.

The plank door entrance to the cabin is located on the east wall and the opening measures 2'6" x 5'9". The south wall window is 3'6" above the ground and measures 5'6" wide and 2'6" in height. The window is constructed from two four-panel windows. The west wall window is 3' above the ground surface, measures 5'6" wide and 2' 5" in height and consists of two six-panel windows.

The gable roof is supported with a single ridgepole and one pair of purlins. The spruce pole rafters support a covering of 15lb felt/tar paper covered with corrugated metal and patched with 5-gallon metal fuel cans.

The exterior of the cabin was photographed in 2020 a seems to be in fair condition. Fire crews cleared fuels zero to 60 feet from around the cabin in an effort to preserve the structure. A shelf has been added to the exterior of the cabin, to the left of the entrance. More small-scale features appear to have been placed around the base of the cabin as well. Front elevation (entrance) is lilting to the right and may need to be stabilized in the future.

Privy (HS-35106)

The 4'4" x 3'1" privy was built sometime in the 1970s and is located 24' to the southwest of the log cabin. The frame is constructed from milled lumber of various sizes sheathed with ¾" thick planks of various lengths. The structure has a simple shed roof covered with corrugated metal. The north wall is 7'4" in height and the shed roof slopes down to the south wall which is only 6'11" tall. The door is intact on the north wall. The east and west walls have small diamond shaped windows covered with wire mesh. A porcupine has gnawed a hole in the lower section of the southeast wall (2007).

The privy was not photographed during the fire crew site visit in 2020. The condition of the privy is unknown.

Elevated Cache (HS- 35104)

The elevated cache was built sometime between 1920 and 1930. Measuring 10' x 10', the log cache is constructed from round spruce logs with dorsal notching and stands on five spruce support logs. Chinking consists of 4" boards. The gable roof is supported by a ridgepole and one set of purlins. The corrugated metal roof is supported by wood planks and rough-cut rafters. The floor of the cache is split logs with the flat side up. The door opening in the east wall measures 2'4" wide and approximately 4' tall. The door is constructed of planks and the opening has ¾" x 6" trim. The cache ladders have fallen apart and are rotting on the ground. Metal sheets sheath the support logs and deter small mammals from gaining access to the cache.

The cache was photographed in 2020 by the fire crews. The cache has collapsed and is therefore in poor condition.

Blacksmith Shop (HS 35105)

The Blacksmith Shop is 17' 4" x 12' 9" rectangular structure built sometime between 1920 and 1930. The milled lumber frame construction has aluminum newspaper printing plate roofing supported by lumber rafters. The planking on the walls and roof are ¾" thick pieces of milled boards of various lengths. The battens are also ¾" thick with various lengths. The entrance is sited on the west wall. There are two windows each 3' 3" wide, 2'3" tall and 3' 7" above the ground. The

windows are covered with wood plank bear shutters. The floor is rough cut planks on full logs.

The blacksmith shop was photographed in 2020 by the fire crew. The structure is in stable condition and

Dog House

The dog house built around 1929 in an A-frame style. Each wall is constructed of a simple 2”x 4” frame, sheathed with 1”x 12” planks, three to a side. The walls measure approximately 3’x 4’. The ridge is covered with tin can remnants.

Historic log cabin, view west (NPS 2006).

Historic outhouse, view southwest (NPS 2006).

Historic cache, view southwest (NPS 2006).

Historic blacksmith shop, view west (NPS 2006).

Historic dog house, view west (NPS 2005).

Historic blacksmith shop, view west (NPS 2020).

Historic blacksmith shop, view west (NPS 2020).

Historic blacksmith shop, view west (NPS 2020).

Historic cache collapsed (NPS 2020).

Collapsed cache (NPS 2020).

Historic main cabin (NPS 2020).

Donkey engine (NPS 2020).

Natural Systems and Features

Geography

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is within the Northern Plateaus physiographic province in east-central Alaska. The preserve contains a portion of the upper Yukon River Valley, an area rich in historic, biotic, and geological features, and the entire 1.1 million-acre Charley River drainage. The estimated area within the authorized boundary in 2,520,000 acres, about 2,207,000 acres of which is federal land.

The incised winding course of the Yukon River is the northern boundary for active placer mining in the preserve. South of the Yukon, steep walls rise to an upland, 800 to 1,200 feet above the river. The mined streams have cut narrow steep-walled valleys into this upland. The streams have low gradients except at their heads. The inter-stream areas are remarkably even-topped as they rise southward from the river. Ten to 25-miles south of the river, these flat-topped ridges are crossed by the Tintina fault. Here the terrain changes to one of strong relief with an intricate system of high ridges and spurs. Mount Sorenson and Twin Mountain are two of the highest

peaks in the area and rise to just slightly above 5,600 feet. The highest point in the preserve is 6,435 feet.

Yukon-Charley is in the discontinuous permafrost zone for Alaska (USGS 1955). The presence and depth of permafrost in the preserve depends on climate, ground cover, soil compositions, water circulation, and topography. Permafrost in Alaska is a product of both the present climate and of colder climates of the past. Formation of permafrost in many areas may have taken thousands of years, and is maintained by an annual air temperature averaging 9°F.

In Yukon-Charley, steep slopes, and coarse, permeable sediments or fractured bedrock favor water circulation, thus the presence of unfrozen zones. Active circulation of surface and subsurface water promotes thawing and prevents formation of permafrost. Unfrozen areas at shallow depth are more common in mountains, especially south facing slopes, than in adjoining areas of low relief. At higher elevations, thick snow cover insulates the ground from deep freezing during winter and furnishes abundant melt water in spring to promote thawing of the seasonally frozen ground.

Geology

The geology of the preserve can be divided into two general rock assemblages which have very different characteristics. They are separated by the Tintina Fault zone, which trends southeast to northwest, and runs parallel to and six to 12 miles south of the Yukon River valley.

North of the fault zone, unmetamorphosed sedimentary rocks range in age from Upper Precambrian to Upper Tertiary. This sequence of sediments includes virtually all periods of geologic history with the exception of the Pennsylvanian period and some gaps within the Mesozoic era (USGS 1969). Sedimentary rocks north of the Tintina Fault contain oil shale in the vicinity of the Yukon River between the Nation and Tatonduk rivers. This same region may contain deposits of lead, zinc, copper, iron, and uranium (BOM 1978). Lignitic coal deposits exist in the vicinity of Washington Creek in the south-central portion of the preserve.

South of the fault zone lies a deformed sequence of regionally metamorphosed Precambrian to Cambrian sediments, volcanics, and intrusive bodies (USGS 1969). The region is considered to be very favorable geologic environment for formation of metallic mineral deposits because of complex relationships between the metamorphosed sediments, granitic intrusive bodies, and extensive faulting. Tin, tungsten, uranium, and other metals are suspected to be present in mineralized areas within the preserve and westward into the Circle, gold placer district (BOM 1978).

Placer gold is the only mineral in the Yukon-Charley region that has been exploited economically. The concentrated gold in the productive placers come from several origins. Some of the nonmarine Tertiary deposits in the Tintina fault trench contain both disseminated and fossil-placer gold. Episodic movements within the Tintina fault zone have produced parallel branches and dilatational fractures. Some of these fractures and faults are highly altered and contain epithermal minerals, including gold. Another source of gold is from present and past terrains lying south of the Tintina fault on its westward moving block. Lastly, the chemical behavior of gold in the weathering cycle of permafrost may have contributed to the placers (Watterson 1985). Thus, the gold in the present placers may stem from one or more sources.

Climate

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve is parr of the great interior, ecological province of Alaska. Its climate is sub-artic, semiarid and continental- a climate characterized by long, cold winters and by short but often warm summers. The rugged Alaska Range and Tanana Uplands furnish nearly complete protection from the continuous stream of storms that sweep across the Gulf of Alaska. The Brooks Range to the north is effective against the winds that blow in from the ice floes of the Arctic Ocean. To the west, the Kuskokwim Mountains, Kokrines Hills, and Ray Mountains from a low, detached range that is usually effective in obstructing the tempering of the influence of the Bering Sea. Only when storms move up the coast of Siberia to a point north of the Aleutian Islands can they swing eastward up the Yukon Valley. On these few occasions, they produce heavy snowfall and mild weather and furnish some relief from the intense cold of winter.

Summers are characterized by nearly continuous daylight for three months. The longest day is 22 hours and 8 minutes and occurs on June 20 or 21. The sun is near the horizon long before sunrise

and long after sunset. This is because its apparent path makes a small angle with the horizon at this latitude. This results in long periods of twilight in all seasons of the year.

Summer temperatures usually range between 37° to 72°F. The lowland temperatures often reach the low 90s because of the long days with typically clear skies. This also creates summer months with average temperatures that vary only a few degrees from year to year.

Aerial view of the 4th of July Creek Mining Camp (NPS 2006).

Aerial view of the tailing at 4th of July Creek Mining Camp (NPS 2006).

Small-Scale Features

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Artifacts associated with the exterior of the building includes a table, two benches, fuel drums, two saws, wire whisk, rubber hose and sluice riffles. The interior of the cabin contains numerous household items including a heating stove, bed, shelves, books, magazines and cookware. Material culture in and underneath the cache includes galvanized wash basin, traps, bottles, cans and a John Deer tractor. The interior artifacts consist of a forge (3' 2" x 3' 6") with a hand crank blower, tools, and wide variety of machine parts. Artifacts around the exterior of the building include a boiler, machine parts, forge parts, pipes, sleds and numerous other miscellaneous objects.

Fire crews preformed cyclic fuels management in 2020 and captured images of the major structures at the site. Trees and shrubs were cleared around the steam donkey. The other feature photographed was the bulldozer, however the cache has collapsed and is laying on top of the bulldozer.

Flatbed sledge (NPS 2006).

1940s era bulldozer (NPS 2006).

Small boiler (NPS 2006).

Donkey engine (NPS 2006).

Mining feature scatter adjacent to the main cabin (NPS 2020).

The cache has collapsed on the bulldozer (NPS 2020).

Topography

Topography is a contributing landscape characteristic. The camp buildings, which reside approximately 10 to 20 feet above the valley floor, were arranged on the leveled tailing piles of the placer mining process. The flattened tailing piles provided a level and well drained structure upon which to build a camp in an otherwise wet, boggy and densely vegetated environment. While many other placer tailing piles exist nearby the mining camp, it is unknown when these piles were deposited, and therefore they are not considered contributing to this particular site. It can be surmised that the flattened tailings pile on which the historic camp resides however is historic, by virtue of the fact that it would have had to be in place before the buildings were constructed on the site. The surrounding tailing piles should be researched further, inventoried, mapped and possibly included as part of a broader district nomination.

Fire crews preformed cyclic fuels management in 2020 and captured images of the major structures at the site. The main focus was clearing and photographs were not taken of the tailings or other smaller features within the camp. The state of the tailings will need to be assessed in the next update.

Tailings at 4th of July Mining Camp (NPS 2006).

Berm around the main cabin (NPS 2006).

Tailing pile (NPS 2006).

Tailing pile located near the main cabin (NPS 2020).

Condition

Condition Assessment Interval

Assessment Interval (Years)

5 years

Condition

Condition

Fair

Condition Date

09/05/2025

Primary Inspector Name

Kelsey Mork

Profession/Credentials

AKRO Historical Landscape Architect

Narrative

A site visit to the 4th of July Creek Mining Camp cultural landscape was not possible during the 2025 field season, however photographs were obtained by the AKRO Cultural Landscape program from the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Fire Management Team from field work in 2020. The images provided an overview of the structures within the landscape, including the collapsed raised cache. During the 2020 fuel management visit, vegetation within a 60 foot radius of the structures were thinned as a preventative measure against fires. Photographs were not taken of the non-structural features on the site such as bulldozers, artifact scatter, the cabin ruins, or the privy. It is unclear on the state of those features. Based on the limited information gathered for the site, the condition is categorized as fair. The main cabin, blacksmith shop, and the steam donkey are in good condition. For a more adequate assessment of the landscape, it is advised that a site visit be accomplished within the next five years.

Condition

Undetermined

Condition Date

08/2024

Primary Inspector Name

Kelsey Mork

Profession/Credentials

Historical Landscape Architect

Narrative

Attempts to visit this landscape have not been successful and it is given another year to attempt assessment. Will be removed from the list in 2025 if not visited.

Condition

Undetermined

Condition Date

09/2022

Primary Inspector Name

Allison Kennedy

Profession/Credentials

Historical Landscape Architecture

Narrative

Park not able to access the site in 2022. Planned for FY23 and will update the record; re-evaluate and set the evaluation interval at this time. FEIL - This inspection needs to happen in FY23 or the landscape will fall off of the Complete Accurate and Reliable list until reinspection is completed.

Condition

Good

Condition Date

09/2012

Primary Inspector Name

N/A

Profession/Credentials

N/A

Narrative

Alaska CLP staff did not visit the site this year. YUCH CR Lead reports no significant changes to landscape condition. Landscape Condition Verification form on file in Alaska CLP archives.

Condition

Good

Condition Date

09/2007

Primary Inspector Name

N/A

Profession/Credentials

N/A

Narrative

No apparent threats to integrity were observed during the site visit

Impacts

Table of Impacts

Type	Impact Type – Other	Internal Source	External Source	Narrative	Date Identified	Resolved?
Neglect		Yes	No	Deterioration on the site as a result of use and maintenance.	04/07/2020	
Release to succession		Yes	No	The landscape is maintained on a five-year cycle by the fire management team. Hardwoods and other fuel is removed from around the main structures.	04/07/2020	Yes
Structural Deterioration		Yes	No	Deterioration as a result of reduction the Raised Cache to convey it is a raised cache due to the structural instability of the support legs.	07/2020	No

Treatment

Stabilization Measures Narrative

N/A

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