

Abundance Tunnel
Site 5ST1140

Local investors drove the ill-fated and inappropriately named Abundance Tunnel into the north side of French Gulch. The tunnel was a costly failure driven in 1906 to undercut the Colorado Group of claims on Prospect Hill. Currently, the site encompasses a collapsed tunnel portal, a burned shop ruin, and several bulldozed waste rock dumps. The site lies on the north side of French Gulch adjacent to and west of the Wellington Mine and Mill, in the McKay Mining District. The steep wall of French Gulch, stripped of soil by hydraulic mining, rises steeply to the north, and the gently sloped floor of the gulch sprawls outward to the south. Because the site suffered almost total disturbance within the last 50 years, it was not recorded in detail. Instead, a summary has been provided below.

Abundance Tunnel Site Description

A collection of features currently represents the Abundance Tunnel, although heavy disturbance compromised the site's integrity. Overall, the site is 315 by 216 feet in area, and the tunnel lies at the north end. The tunnel collapsed, leaving an area of subsidence 7 feet wide and around 22 feet long that drains water.

When miners drove the tunnel, they generated a considerable volume of waste rock that they dumped to the south, forming a large pad. Within recent decades, most of the rock was removed, leaving a lobe 114 feet long and 48 feet wide surrounded by a bulldozed area. Due to the disturbance, the waste rock dump no longer retains its original size, shape, or appearance. In addition, people left recent junk on and around the waste rock dump.

A second pad of waste rock, 82 by 69 feet in area, lies downslope from and south of the main pad. This lower waste rock dump lost its integrity because the entire eastern portion was removed with heavy equipment. The area between the upper and lower dumps was also bulldozed, leaving a swath 96 feet wide.

Like most mines, the Abundance Tunnel featured a surface plant around the tunnel portal, but a broad road was bulldozed through the area where the facilities were located, which erased important material evidence. Workers erected what appears to have been a log shop building on the waste rock dump near the tunnel portal. The structure, 15 by 20 feet in area, burned, leaving several courses of logs as representations of the walls. After the building burned, people threw refuse into the interior.

Abundance Tunnel Site Significance and Management Recommendations

Today, the site retains little historical integrity due to extensive bulldozing and earthmoving. The disturbance is so great that, even from afar, the site no longer resembles a hardrock mine and instead manifests as bulldozed mounds of rock and earth. For this reason, the site is no longer a viable entity and contributes little to French Gulch's historic landscape. Management recommendations suggest no further consideration as a cultural resource.