

Jessie Mine: Jessie Tunnel
Site 5ST1152

The Jessie Tunnel was part of the greater Jessie mining and milling operation. Miners drove the tunnel during the 1880s to undercut the Jessie and other veins at depth, and continued to use the tunnel for decades. The site, at around 9,800 feet elevation, lies on the east side of Gold Run Gulch directly above the Jessie Mill and Quincy Tunnel. Historically, a road descended from the tunnel down to the mill. The steep wall of Gold Run Gulch surrounds the site and is vegetated with a young lodgepole pine forest. Within the recent past, a road was bulldozed through the site's most important portion where historic surface plant features were located. As a result, this bulldozing compromised the site's archaeological integrity.

Jessie Mine: Jessie Tunnel Site Description

Like most mines in the area, the tunnel portal collapsed and created a linear area of subsidence. Miners used ore cars to deposit waste rock at the tunnel portal, forming a dump (F2) 114 by 138 feet in area and around 15 feet high. The dump features four principal lobes that reflect dead-end rail lines used to deposit the waste rock. A few artifacts lie scattered down the dump's flanks and around the base.

A frame blacksmith shop, now gone, stood on the dump near the tunnel portal. The building's platform (F3) currently remains, and log footers outline the southwest and northwest edges. In addition, a mound left from a gravel-filled wood box forge lies on the north portion. Someone bulldozed earth onto the platform's north corner and southeast edge, and truncated the northeast edge. This earth moving compromised the platform's integrity, and a few artifacts lie scattered around.

The mine's blacksmith dumped his shop refuse outside and southwest of the shop building. Over time, he formed a deposit (F4) 12 feet in diameter and around 8 inches thick of primarily forge clinker. A few industrial items are mixed in, and meaningful buried deposits are unlikely.

The site possesses a limited artifact assemblage. Cut nails and a blasting powder keg made by the Laflin & Rand Powder Company reflect an 1880s timeframe. Wire nails and a hole-in-cap can assembled with an inner-rolled and soldered side seam postdate 1890. Most of the artifacts are general structural debris and shop refuse. Lengths of ventilation tubing indicate that the surface plant featured a ventilation blower.

Jessie Mine: Jessie Tunnel Site Interpretation

The Jessie Tunnel was a moderate-sized tunnel operation typical of those in Summit County. The surface plant was simple and consisted of little more than a blacksmith shop. The mine lacked machinery except for the blower mostly because the facilities at the mill provided services. The surface plant also had no ore bin, which indicates that the miners did two things with the ore. One was sacking the material on site for shipment, and the other was dropping the ore into workings that descended to the Quincy Tunnel. In general, the tunnel contrasts against the rest of the Jessie operation. The tunnel was a simple operation, its facilities restricted the volume of production, and it reflects limited capital investment.

Jessie Mine: Jessie Tunnel Site Significance and Management Recommendations

Due to bulldozing, the Jessie Tunnel site retains little integrity. The area where the important surface plant features were located was bulldozed, and the artifact assemblage is incomplete. As a result, the site only poorly represents a tunnel mine. For these reasons, the site is recommended ineligible and is no longer significant as a historic resource. The site does, however, possess some value as a contributing element of Gold Run Gulch's historic landscape. The waste rock dump is visible from afar and reinforces the impression of the Jessie Mine as a major operation. Because the site appears to be ineligible, management recommendations suggest no further action.

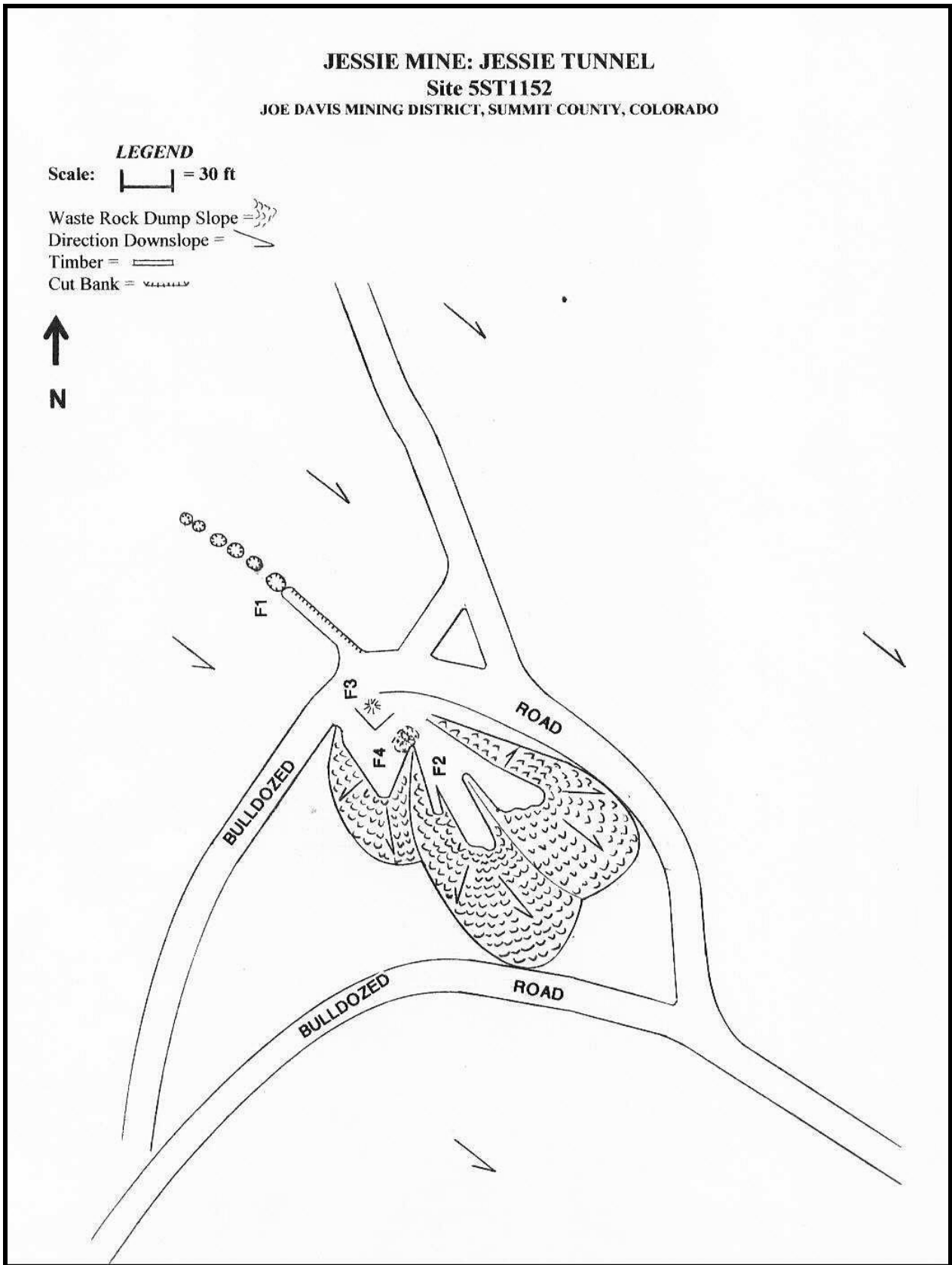


Figure 2.38: Plan view of the Jessie Tunnel site.