

Peabody Placer Mine
Site 5ST1154

The Peabody Placer Mine occupies a massive tract of land on the west side of Gold Run Gulch. The area was first mined for placer gold by hand during Summit County's early 1860s boom, and Leon Peabody acquired claims during the 1870s, consolidated them, and then worked the property on a company basis for decades. The site currently offers a variety of manifestations from Peabody's operation. Most of these are landscape features typical of hydraulic placer mining. The site also includes several complexes of archaeological features representing areas last worked, the mine's infrastructure, and workers' residences. Several of these were recorded in detail while the rest of the site has been only broadly characterized due to its size.

At around 9,620 feet elevation, the site ascends west from the floor of Gold Run Gulch up to the edge of a natural flat area. Historic placer mines, now in poor condition, flank the Peabody property. Distinct landscape characteristics serve as clear boundaries between the Peabody and these lesser mines. The entire area is vegetated with a thick and young lodgepole pine forest, and arctic willows line Gold Run Creek. Dense stands of alder also grow in low areas within the site, choking some features such as ditches and excavations.

Within the last several decades, the Town of Breckenridge bulldozed a cross-country ski trail through the site's eastern portions, and a second trail is being planned. In the context of the site's scale, the existing trail resulted in little impact beyond damaging a residential feature. The proposed trail also will have little impact and is actively being routed around important feature complexes.

Peabody Placer Mine History

The roots of the Peabody Placer Mine extend back in time to the gold rush that swept the Breckenridge area during the early 1860s. In 1859, miners discovered placer gold in Gold Run Gulch, which incited a minor rush to the drainage. During that year and into 1860, miners claimed the entire gulch from mouth to head and worked the gravel largely by hand. Miners fortunate enough to arrive early were entitled to one creek claim 100 feet long and 150 feet wide. Late arrivals resigned themselves to bank claims 100 by 100 feet in area. Regardless of location, most of the claims offered enough gold to be marginally profitable at the least, although access to water plagued the owners of the bank claims. To remediate this problem, a group of miners pooled their resources and excavated a ditch that carried water from the Blue River into the gulch.¹

During 1860, miners proved that Gold Run Gulch was among the richest drainages in Summit County. Of the activity, the *Rocky Mountain News* noted that: "Gold Run is being worked from one extremity to the other and every day the news passes up or down, of the streak being struck, on such a number, which is equivalent to a fortune found and fairly secured."² The labor of mining was so financially rewarding that twenty-five to thirty individuals decided to spend the winter of 1860-1861 at work, despite the snow and freezing water. This was unprecedented and railed against the usual seasonal migration from the high-country down to the plains.³

¹ Hollister, 1867:334.

² *Rocky Mountain News* 6/13/60.

³ *Rocky Mountain News* 1/21/61; *Rocky Mountain News* 3/13/61.



Figure 2.40: The westerly view illustrates hydraulic mining and the necessary infrastructure on the Peabody Placer during the 1880s. At center, workers use a monitor to blast gravel banks loose and wash the sediment into a sluice, lower right. The pipeline at lower right carried pressurized water to other monitors in the mine's lower portions. Sluice beds such as in the photo manifest as overgrown trenches on the site today. The pipeline may be the one currently represented by a linear bed documented amid the residential complex, described below. Source: Denver Public Library, X-60106.

Within a short time, Gold Run Gulch followed a pattern common to Colorado's other placer mining centers. When individual miners exhausted the easily won gold and decided to leave, they sold their claims to partnerships and cooperatives, which ultimately evolved into companies. By pooling their resources, the company members were able to construct water delivery and sluice infrastructures that allowed groups of claims to be worked on large scales.

The Gold Run Ditch Company was among the largest of these outfits, and it was organized in 1862 by a number of claim holders. Because the 1860 ditch provided an inadequate supply of water, the company excavated a second ditch slightly more than eight miles long to import more liquid from the Blue River. The company then hired a large crew that shoveled gold-bearing gravel into a system of sluices 1,650 feet long. With this method, the company realized \$70,000 in 1863 alone and slightly smaller sums afterward.⁴

⁴ Hall, 1894; Hollister, 1867:334; *Rocky Mountain News* 5/8/74, p.2 c.3.



Figure 2.41: In this 1880s northwestern view, a worker uses a hydraulic monitor to push gold-bearing gravel through sluices on the Peabody Placer. The box extending left from the monitor was a counterweight filled with cobbles. Source: Denver Public Library, X-60107.

At the same time, John Shock, a California gold miner, leased a group of claims on the gulch's west side from L.G. Tubbs & Company. Through systematic prospecting, Shock discovered a rich layer of gravel 1 mile in length and 100 feet wide. Between 1863 and around 1870, Shock mined an astounding \$500,000 in gold. It remains unknown if Shock purchased the Tubbs property and other claims, but this most likely became the Peabody Placer.⁵

It remains unknown when Leon Peabody arrived in the Breckenridge area. By 1873, he employed a crew of six workers on a group of claims in Gold Run Gulch and reinvested his earnings buying additional properties. Peabody joined forces with George W. Mumford, who pursued a similar strategy with his Mumford Placer farther down the gulch. Together, Peabody and Mumford created a large operation that took in the middle section of Gold Run Gulch, was fed water by three ditches, and featured a system of sluices 600 feet long. Peabody also ran a smaller, adjacent mine with three more sluices 200, 300, and 400 feet long. Both operations

⁵ Hall, 1894.

generated significant profits by 1883, although production declined through the rest of the 1880s.⁶



Figure 2.42: In 1909, when this west overview was captured, the Peabody Placer was a landscape of gravel outwash fans and cut-banks. The site has changed little today except for revegetation. The ore cars at right belong to the Jessie Mine's Glenwood Tunnel. Source: Ransome, 1911.

Based on the lack of coverage by archival sources, it appears that the Peabody Placer was idle from around 1890 until 1895. In 1896, Peabody had a crew at work readying the infrastructure for a resumption of mining and then began production. In 1898, he invested in a number of monitors to increase the amount of gravel washed through the sluices and maintained operations through 1899.⁷

By 1900, Peabody retired from his company and leased the entire mine the following year to Ben Stanley Revett's American Gold Dredging Company. Revett probably leased the Peabody Placer for the same reason he leased the adjoining Jessie Mine. Specifically, in an attempt to develop an effective gold dredge, he mismanaged the company into bankruptcy and needed the income to continue his dredge project. With a history of hydraulic operations at the Cache Creek Placer in Chaffee County and the nearby Wapiti Mining Company, Revett was well-equipped to work the Peabody Placer. The profits apparently satisfied Revett and the company directors, which is why they maintained the lease through 1904.⁸

⁶ *Colorado Mining Directory*, 1883:792; *Report of the Director of the Mint*, 1883:558; *Report of the Director of the Mint*, 1884:428.

⁷ "Mining News" *EMJ* 8/20/98, p227; "Mining News" *EMJ* 6/17/99, p718; "Mining News" *MIR* 5/28/96 p564; "Mining News" *MSP* 9/10/98, p259.

⁸ *Colorado Mining Directory*, 1901:119; *Summit County Journal* 12/31/04.

American Gold Dredging apparently suspended operations in 1905, and the Peabody Placer remained idle for several years. In 1911, the Colorado Gold Dredging Company leased the property and began hydraulic mining. After several years, the available gravel had been exhausted and the mine was permanently closed.⁹

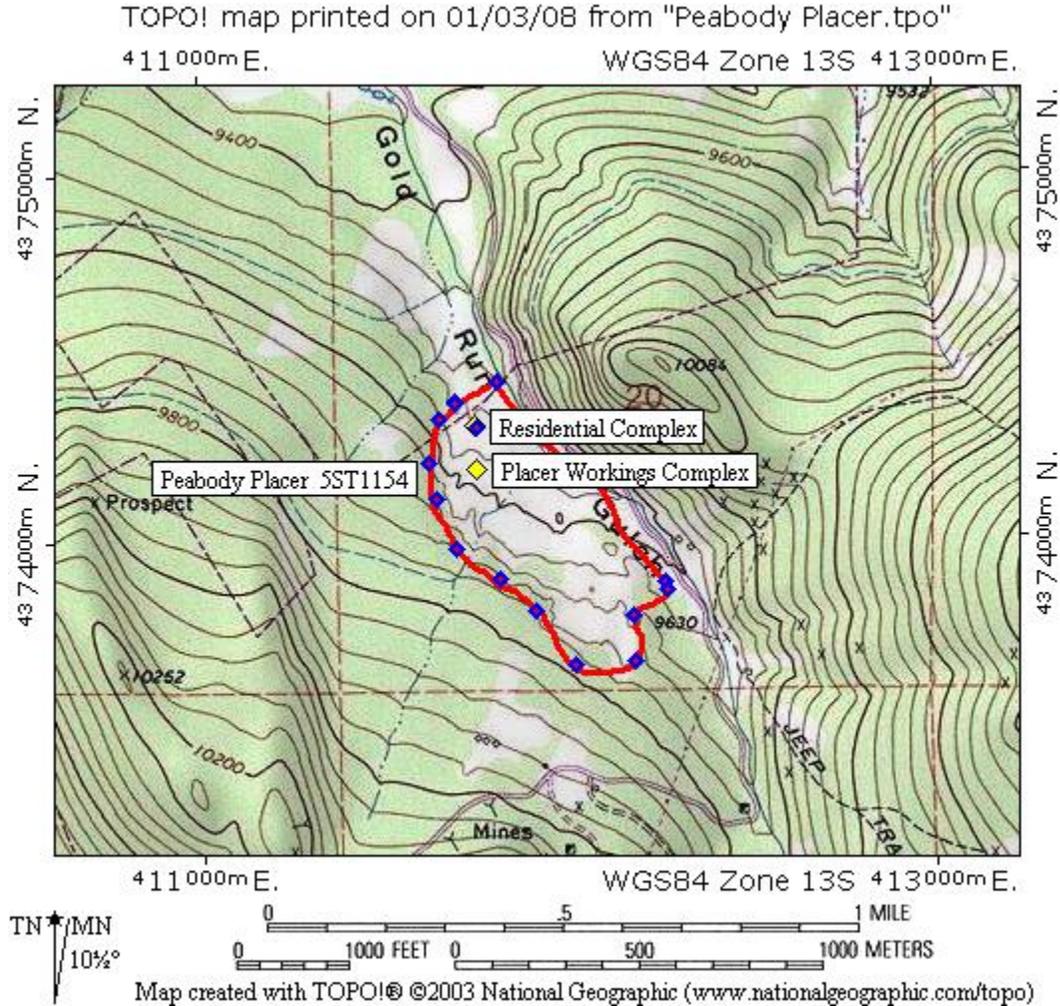


Figure 2.43: The map shows the Peabody Placer site boundaries and the locations of the Residential Complex and Placer Workings, which were recorded in detail and described below.

Peabody Placer Mine Site Description

Today, the Peabody Placer features a landscape created by hydraulic mining between the 1880s and the early 1910s. The site can be divided into four lengthy northwest-southeast zones that parallel Gold Run Creek. The first is approximately 400 feet wide and 2,500 feet long, and it features a coalescence of gravel outwash fans. An end-product of hydraulic mining, the fans form a broad apron of placer tailings washed out of sluices and down from active workings. Toward their western, upslope edges, the fans give way to vertical formations of thick sediments as high as 30 feet in elevation. The formations are scarred by hydraulic mining and feature

⁹ "Current News" *Mining Science* 6/29/11 p675; *Mineral Resources*, 1911:562; *Summit County Journal* 12/3011.

abrupt and steep cut-banks, eroded surfaces, and beds of gravel left in place by the miners. Steep drainages descend between the formations, and they were created by torrents that carried liquefied tailings down to the outwash fans. The first zone is largely devoid of identifiable features and artifacts clearly attributable to the mining operations.

The second zone is approximately 400 feet wide and 2,000 feet long, and it consists of a mix of unmined gravel formations, tailings effluent drainages, tailings mounds, a few sluice beds, and concentrations of cobbles. The zone represents early hydraulic workings in a severe state of erosion and decay caused by more recent mining upslope and west (in the third zone). These early workings were impacted by subsequent hand-mining, scouring by liquefied tailings flows, and tailings deposition. Segments of sluice beds and collection dams are obvious in some areas, but they are fragmented and incomplete. Tailings piles, collections of cobbles, and bowl-shaped depressions represent areas of early mining, but they, too, are incomplete. Artifacts are few and include mostly structural debris.

The third zone is approximately 300 feet wide and 1,800 feet long, and it features the areas last worked. According to dateable artifacts, some of the areas were abandoned during the 1880s while others were worked during the 1890s or 1900s. Artifacts attributable to the 1880s include cut nails; hole-in-cap cans assembled with lapped side seams; and crude, hand-finished bottle fragments. Items reflecting the 1890s and 1900s consist of wire nails, hole-in-cap cans assembled with inner-rolled and soldered side seams, sanitary cans, and hand-finished bottle fragments. Overall, the artifact assemblage is relatively light.

The third zone offers the richest assemblage of features on the site. Most of the workings manifest as bowl-shaped excavations that range in width from 50 to 150 feet and in length from 100 to 400 feet. Miners created the excavations by using hydraulic monitors to blast gravel loose and wash it into sluices. Many of the excavations feature beds for the sluices, which now manifest as overgrown trenches and ditches. Downslope and beyond the excavations, the sluices were elevated on gravel bars, some of which can still be discerned.

Most of the excavations are highly eroded and choked with erosional deposits and vegetation. A few, however, possess identifiable features that reflect aspects of the mining operations. At one time, many of the excavations featured collection dams at their mouths, and the dams shunted liquefied gravel into sluices. The dams were constructed with cobbles, earth, and lumber, and all featured spillways near center. The spillways directed slurry into sluices, a handful of which are represented by ditches and elevated gravel beds.

Many of the excavations feature collections and mounds of cobbles, which workers generated in two ways. One method was to rake through the gold-bearing gravel with shovels and pitchforks in a primitive attempt at screening out the cobbles. The other method used the same implements to screen the cobbles out of the sluices during operations. In most cases, the workers heaved the cobbles into piles, and in a few areas, they used wheelbarrows on plank runways.

Monitor stations are evident in and around a few of the excavations. The stations are circular, rimmed by cobbles, and usually possess cut nails and pieces of lumber. When intact, the stations featured the supports for the hydraulic monitors used to blast loose the gravel beds.

The site's fourth zone features the mine's main cut-bank, which wraps around the site's western portion. The bank ranges in width from 60 to 120 feet and in height from 20 to 60 feet. Its face represents the ground last worked with hydraulic monitors, and the texture is a mix of uniform slopes and steep, crenellated surfaces. The land above the cut-bank is unaltered and natural, and it features a few ditches that delivered water.

Two of the site's feature complexes were recorded in detail. One was a relatively intact set of workings that encapsulate many of the features scattered throughout the rest of the site. The other was the site's center of infrastructure and workers' residence.

The workings lie in the site's west-central portion. Miners used a combination of hand-labor and a water jet from a hydraulic monitor to blast loose auriferous gravel and wash the material into a sluice. Over time, the miners created an ovoid excavation (F1) approximately 90 by 230 feet in area and at least 18 feet deep. A sluice extended down the center of the workings, and a collection dam stopped the north end. As the gravel washed away, the workers used pitchforks and shovels to screen out cobbles, which they dumped in linear piles along the floor of the workings. Over time, the sluice bed (F3) assumed the form of a trench around 7 feet wide and 3 feet deep in the tailings.

A ditch descended south into the workings from a minor drainage in a lofty cut-bank. The ditch (F2) carried water for two purposes. One was to provide a continuous flow through the sluice and the second was for a practice known as booming. The practice involved a sudden release of water into placer workings, which washed gravel en masse into the sluice.

A dam at the mouth of the placer workings collected gravel-laden runoff and directed it into a second sluice that extended northeast. Workers constructed the dam (F4) with cobbles that they generated during screening and sorting efforts. The dam is approximately 30 feet wide, 65 feet long, and 8 feet high, and it features a spillway at center for the sluice head. Workers constructed dry-laid rock walls to neatly define the spillway's sides. The upslope side of the dam featured a wall of planks nailed to log posts, and the wall prevented runoff from permeating through the cobbles.

The second sluice extended northeast from the collection dam, and it received runoff from the placer workings. The sluice was elevated on a gravel bed approximately 8 feet wide and 100 feet long. The bed features four relatively level segments that descend in stairstep fashion.

The center of infrastructure offers a second, relatively intact set of placer workings, as well as aspects of a main pipeline and workers' housing. The placer workings are associated with a bowl-shaped excavation approximately 100 by 400 feet in area. Workers constructed a semicircular dam (F1) at the mouth to collect liquefied gravel and direct it into a sluice. The dam is around 40 feet long and 5 feet high, and it consists of earth and cobbles.

Alluvium mobilized by hydraulic mining ran into a sluice, which collected the placer gold and allowed the spent tailings to pass through. The sluice descended in a trench (F2) along the face of the workings. After the workings were abandoned, the sluice was removed and the trench eroded into a minor drainage. The trench is currently around 25 feet wide, choked with vegetation, and blanketed with alluvium. During cleanup operations, workers shoveled tailings out of the sluice and onto the east side, creating a linear berm.

A monitor used to blast loose auriferous alluvium with a water jet was perched on a tongue of placer tailings, and topographical alterations (F3) and artifacts currently remain. One of the alterations is a platform 12 feet wide and 22 feet long on which the monitor was mounted. Workers cleared the center of cobbles to form a flat, smooth, working surface. A linear depression for the pipeline that fed the monitor ascends southwest along an elevated gravel bar, and a circular depression lies at the platform's northeast end. The depression, 6 feet in diameter, received blow-off water from the monitor and directed it into the nearby sluice bed.

Workers constructed a second monitor station different and more distinct than the first. The station (F4) is 10 feet wide, 18 feet long, and features an arced footprint. Dry-laid rock walls 3 feet high retain a pad of sorted placer tailings. Cut log ends lie around.

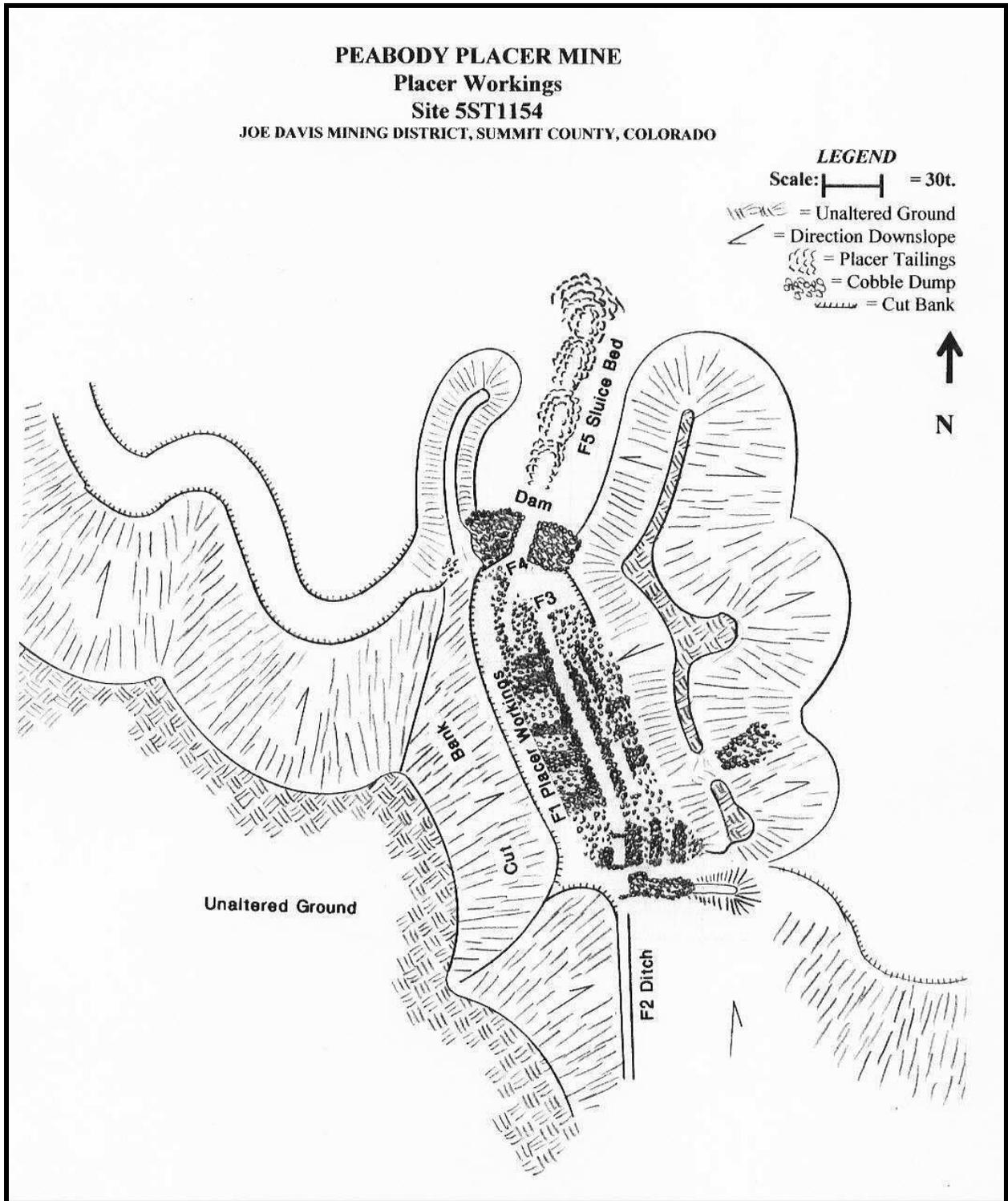
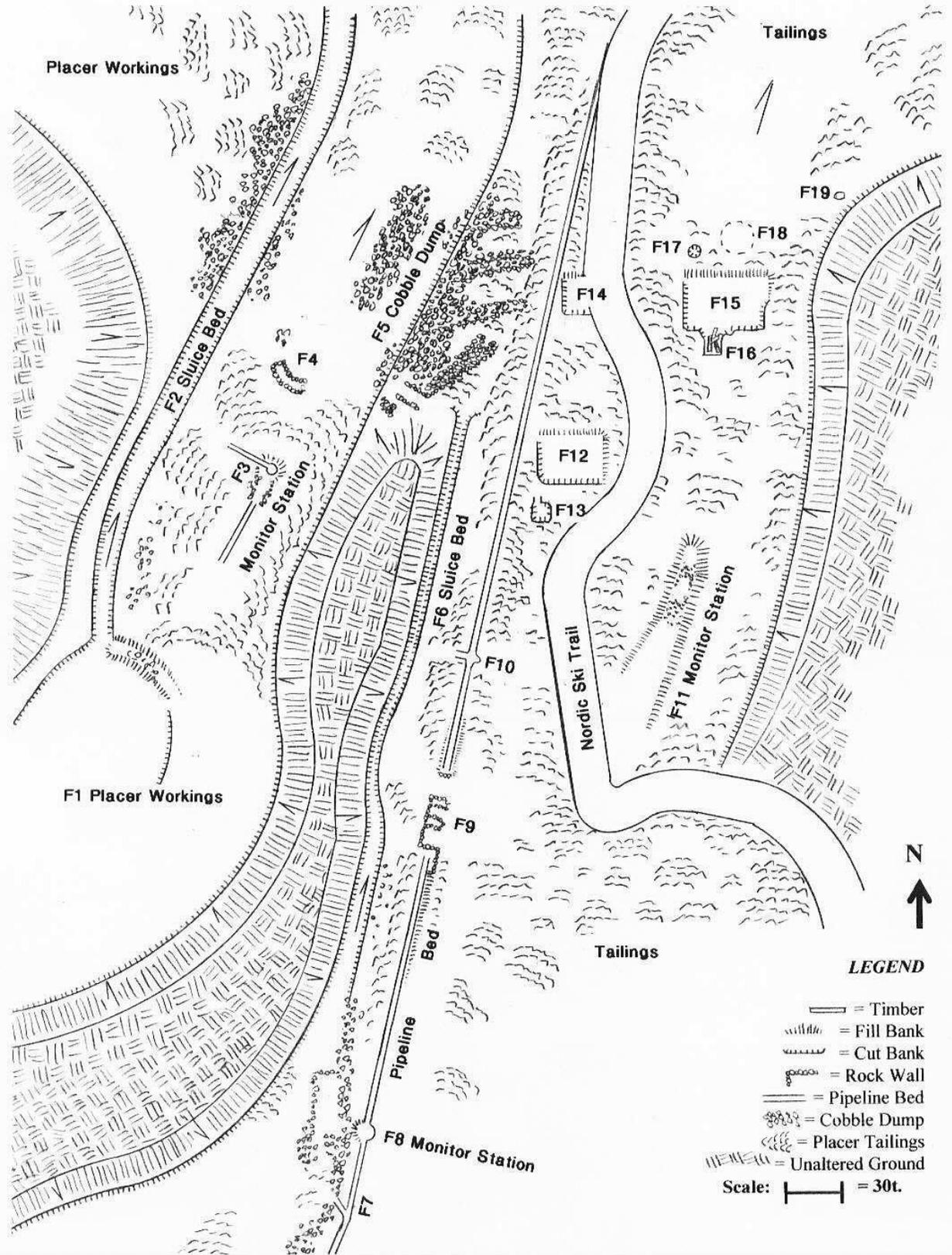


Figure 2.44: Plan view of relatively intact hydraulic workings.

**PEABODY PLACER MINE
Infrastructure and Workers' Residence
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JOE DAVIS MINING DISTRICT, SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO**



Workers used pitchforks and shovels to clear virgin ground of cobbles prior to washing the sediment into sluices. The workers used wheelbarrows to shuttle the cobbles away and dump them into piles and concentrations along both sides of a sluice bed. On the bed's east side, the workers erected a gangway above the ground and dumped the cobbles off the sides, creating a linear pile (F5). As the workers progressed upslope, they moved the gangway two times and repeated the process, leaving two more linear piles. The most recent one still features the remnants of log pilings for the gangway.

A second sluice bed descends from another bowl-shaped hydraulic working. The bed (F6) parallels a bank of virgin ground, which was washed into the sluice either by hand or with a monitor. The bed is now choked with vegetation and ends above the cobble dump.

A third monitor was strategically located on a tongue of placer tailings to the east. The station (F11) currently remains and manifests as a platform that workers cleared of cobbles to provide a flat work space. The platform is 10 feet wide and 30 feet long, and the northeast end features a circular boundary of cobbles while the southwest end features a low berm of tailings. A small pile of cobbles dumped out of the monitor's counterweight box lies on the platform.

One of the mine's principal water mains descended east-northeast through the complex, and a number of associated archaeological features currently remain. One of the most fundamental features is the pipeline bed (F7), which is distinct. Workers prepared the bed by grading a fairly even line through placer tailings and shoveling out a depression at center for the pipe. The depression ranges from 2 to 3 feet in width and is around 6 inches deep. The pipeline originated southwest and above the placer workings and terminated northeast of the residential complex. Pieces of hardware and a few segments of pipe lie scattered along the grade, and the pipe was 30 inches in diameter and consisted of riveted sheet steel.

The pipeline passed directly through a set of placer workings on its descent to the residential complex. At the mouth, workers installed a monitor on the pipeline, and the monitor station now manifests as an ovoid platform (F8) 12 by 15 feet in area. Workers cleared the surface of cobbles and bermed them along the platform's sides, leaving an even gravel floor. A few cut nails remain.

Farther down-gradient, the pipeline featured a penstock, which was a rectangular wooden tank that served two functions. One was to moderate the flow of water, and the second was a junction for distribution pipes that fed the monitors. A stone foundation (F9) currently remains for the pipeline and the tank's footers. A rock berm elevated the pipeline 3 feet as it entered the penstock, and another rock berm supported the pipeline as it left the penstock. A rock pylon 5 feet wide, 12 feet long, and 5 feet high supported the penstock's head, and two gravel pads 3 by 9 feet in area and 1 foot high retained by cobbles supported the structure's footers. A handful of cut- and wire nails remain, and they indicate that the penstock was built during the 1880s and repaired after 1890.

Near the residential complex, the pipeline featured a junction with a distribution pipe or a drain valve. The location is now denoted by a T-shaped platform (F10) 4 feet wide and 10 feet long.

When intact, the residential complex consisted of three buildings, which have been reduced to platforms and associated artifacts. Workers graded the platforms with cut-and-fill methods on a fan of braided placer tailings. The southwest building was 27 by 36 feet in area, stood on timbers laid on the platform (F12), and had electric lighting. Workers excavated a root cellar (F13) behind the boardinghouse, and it collapsed, leaving a square depression 12 by 12 feet in area and 3 feet deep. A light scatter of domestic refuse surrounds the boardinghouse platform, and buried deposits are unlikely because the tailings are dense.

The northwest building was a single residence, possibly for the superintendent. The platform (F14) currently remains, but the eastern portion was destroyed when the ski trail was bulldozed through the site. A few artifacts lie north and west, although most of the assemblage was lost to the road.

The southwest building was the mine's principal boardinghouse. The platform (F15) is 36 by 54 feet in area, and it appears that the boardinghouse was around 30 by 45 feet in size. A collapsed root cellar (F16) lies behind and south, and it was front-gabled, around 8 by 10 feet in area, and 5 feet high.

The main boardinghouse residents disposed of their refuse in the manner common to mining camps. Specifically, they relied on privies for their personal use and threw solid waste around the boardinghouse. Artifacts lie north and south of the platform, and because the surrounding area lacks soil, buried deposits are unlikely. The residents dumped a considerable amount of refuse downslope and north of the platform, creating a concentration (F18), 30 feet in diameter, of mostly food cans.

Two pits currently remain from the privies, and they appear to differ in age. The northwestern pit (F17) is 5 feet in diameter and 3 feet deep and is encircled with voluminous backdirt in the form of placer tailings. The backdirt indicates that the pit is deep, and buried deposits are therefore likely. The northeastern pit (F19) manifests as a rectangular depression 3 by 5 feet in area and 1 foot deep. Several pieces of lumber are embedded in the sides, and they were probably elements of the privy building's foundation. A small amount of backdirt suggests that the pit is shallow, but meaningful buried deposits are possible.

Peabody Placer Mine Site Interpretation

Few placer mines in Colorado were as extensive as the Peabody operation in scale, acreage, and the amount of gravel funneled through its sluices. A mine as large as the Peabody could only have been worked over the course of several decades. During the 1860s and 1870s, partnerships and companies focused on the property's richest gravel and recovered gold by hand. By the 1880s, Leon Peabody's private organization employed a combination of booming and hydraulic methods to process lower grades of gravel in economies of scale. Peabody maintained operations through most of the 1890s, and a lessee continued during the 1900s. While archival sources make no mention, it seems likely that partnerships returned to the mine during the 1930s when the area saw a Depression-era revival of gold mining.

As a landscape, the site's topographical features reflect sequential mining operations. The site was worked from the lower, east portion to the upper, west side so that gravity would draw liquefied gravel down through the sluices. Given this, the site's eastern portions are earlier than the western area, which was the zone of last work. The early workings no longer retain integrity because as the miners progressed upslope and west, the early workings were either buried by gravel outwash or eroded by the flows of liquefied tailings.

A site such as the Peabody Placer could only have been worked with capital, sound hydraulic engineering, and a substantial workforce. The Peabody Placer Mine's engineer had to secure enough water, organize a system of delivery ditches, design an effective plumbing system, and plan a sound system of sluices. The plumbing system in particular had to provide water under great pressure to the monitors for hydraulic mining. Such a system included penstocks, pressurized mains, distribution pipes, valves, and drains. The pipeline bed that passes through the site's residential complex currently represents some of these important aspects. Other pipelines probably existed, but their evidence has been destroyed by mining and natural decay.

The site's residential complex reflects formal engineering and planning. Specifically, the buildings are oriented north-south and arranged according to a grid. Other buildings may have existed, but their evidence has been lost to erosion and construction of the ski trail.

The rich artifact assemblage associated with the residential complex allows us to draw a number of conclusions regarding the workforce, of which archival sources make no mention. For example, the numbers of workers can be estimated from the floor space offered by the boardinghouses. In general, unmarried workers required at least 60 square feet for bedding and personal possessions. Married couples usually had more space, and self-contained households had common areas dedicated to communal activities. Given this, the southwestern boardinghouse could have accommodated ten workers while the northeastern one sheltered around twelve. This reflects a crew of around twenty-five.¹⁰

Most but not all the residents were men who belonged to a working-class socioeconomic status. According to a garter hook, a woman lived in the northeast boardinghouse, and she may have been employed as the hostler. Material evidence also suggests that some of the workers were immigrants of different ethnic groups. Three beer bottles with British makers' marks and one torpedo-type bottle may reflect English individuals, and wine and champagne bottles could have been left by workers of European origin.

The crew consumed a Victorian diet traditional to western mining camps. Numerous cans reflect an emphasis on preserved foods including soups, stews, vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, and preserves. Baking powder cans indicate that the crew also prepared baked goods. While butchered bones are absent, it seems likely that the workers ate some fresh meat and disposed of the bones by burial.

The workers openly enjoyed alcohol, but the quantity per person is questionable. The site's artifact assemblage includes eighty-seven fragmented liquor bottles, nine beer vessels, six wine and champagne bottles, and several liquor jugs. When averaged over the course of the mine's lifespan, the totals suggest moderate consumption. A similar case can be made regarding the use of patent medicine. The nine bottles suggest that some workers suffered temporary ailments.

Peabody Placer Mine Site Significance

On a broad scale, the Peabody Placer Mine site retains a high degree of archaeological integrity from the 1880s, when Leon Peabody worked the property as a large operation, to around 1912 when the mine closed. The site also possesses an ambiance and feel of high-altitude hydraulic mining, and because of its scale, constitutes a compelling cultural landscape. For these reasons, and because of the site's historical importance, the site is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A, C, and D, and for the SRHP under Criteria A, C, and E. The site is important on national, state, and local levels.

In terms of NRHP and SRHP Criterion A, the Peabody Placer is associated with important trends. On a local level, the mine was one of the Breckenridge area's greatest gold producers, employers, and consumers of goods and services. In this capacity, the mine was a cornerstone of the local economy. As a high-volume producer and an advanced operation, the mine was a bellwether of the local placer mining industry, which boomed between the 1880s and 1910s. The mine stimulated confidence in the industry, contributed to its overall production figures, and interested investors in the area.

¹⁰ Hardesty, 1988:12.

The Peabody Placer participated in several statewide and national trends. First, the mine contributed to Colorado's economy through its voluminous production and consumption of goods and services. Further, nearly all the mine's owners lived in Colorado and so most of the income realized from production remained within the state.

Second, the mine's operators purchased much of their equipment from manufacturers in Denver, which hosted one of the most important mine supply industries in the United States. In so doing, the operators helped Denver's mine supply industry maintain its status.

Last, the Peabody Placer was a constituent in a wave of corporate hydraulic mining that peaked in the West during the 1880s and 1890s. In this role, the site participated in the development of the West's important hydraulic mining industry and contributed to advances in hydraulic engineering. In association, the mine served as an example to engineers of how to plan, equip, and manage a large and complex hydraulic operation.

In terms of NRHP and SRHP Criterion C, the Peabody Placer clearly embodies a massive, advanced hydraulic mining operation. Based on intact sets of archaeological features, the scope, scale, and nature of the site can be readily identified. Evidence of ditches, flumes, and penstocks represents the complex water system used for booming, to power monitors, and to maintain a flow in the sluices. The placer workings and features within portray the variety of placer mining methods employed by Leon Peabody. Ditches, excavated areas, monitor stations, and pipeline remnants, and beds represent the use of monitors to blast the site's thick gravel beds apart. Ditches, low points of topography within the workings, and vast tailings fans remain from the practice of booming to wash gravel through the mine's sluices. Sluice beds and collection dams are left from the sluice systems that recovered gold from gravel.

The site also possesses a residential center that featured an office/single residence and several boardinghouses. These features and their associated artifacts reflect aspects of the living conditions and the workers' demography, diet, health, and levels of substance abuse.

The overall intact nature of the site on both broad and localized scales is key in recommending its importance. In general, placer mines usually lie in poor preservation environments. They are often located in drainages subject to erosion, deposition of alluvium, and frequent moisture, which destroy features and artifacts. In addition, areas worked for placer gold were usually mined intermittently for decades, causing the loss of early features and artifacts. For these reasons, placer mines with integrity are relatively few and exemplify a type of mining important to Colorado. Further, hydraulic mining was not employed as often as hand-methods. Given this, the Peabody Placer is probably one of only a handful of hydraulic mines in Colorado that retain integrity.

The site constitutes an impressive, historic landscape evocative of hydraulic mining on micro and macro levels. The site can be seen from afar, offers characteristics distinctive of hydraulic mining, and imparts the scale and impacts of hydraulic mining.

In terms of NRHP Criterion D and SRHP Criterion E, the Peabody Placer will yield meaningful data in several arenas. First, the 2007 recordation was cursory and sought information to characterize the site and to recommend eligibility and management actions. Recording the entire site according to Class III+ standards will provide additional information for a detailed analysis of exact mining methods, gold recovery, water use and distribution, and engineering and planning on a broad scale. To fully record the site, the hydraulic workings, hand workings, ditch systems, and pipeline and penstock systems should be surveyed, mapped, and recorded. The ditches should be followed to their sources to gain information regarding how waterways were diverted to the mine.

Second, while extensive archival research regarding the site was carried out, institutions in the Denver area probably offer additional information. The current understanding and interpretation of the site history, workings, infrastructure, and residences can be improved by additional records searches.

Peabody Placer Mine Site Management Recommendations

The Peabody Placer Mine is an important node on several heavily used recreational trail systems. The Gold Run Gulch trail passes along the site's east edge, a Nordic ski trail winds through the site, and a single-track connector is proposed for the site's western portion. The heavy recreational use offers great potential to develop the site as a heritage resource. Signage or pamphlets can explain the history of the site, placer mining, Gold Run Gulch, and the area's placer mining industry.

The Town of Breckenridge proposes grading a new Nordic ski trail within the site, and the trail has great heritage resource potential. First, the trail can serve as a self-guided tour for recreationists to discover and learn of the area's general mining history, the Peabody Placer history, and hydraulic mining methods. To accomplish this, signage can be posted at key feature complexes to explain aspects of the above. Rebecca Waugh's Iowa Hill site and interpretive trail can serve as a model.

Second, the proposed trail can provide recreationists with an intimate experience of a hydraulic placer mine. The trail will pass through micro environments and topography that are clearly evocative of hydraulic operations. In some areas, the trail will cut through placer mining features such as tailings piles, ditches, and sluice beds, which can provide recreationists with a three-dimensional perspective of the types of features found only at hydraulic placer mines. Overall, the disturbance will be minor and not conflict with the site's historic integrity.

Third, the existing trailhead at the mouth of Gold Run Gulch provides easy access to the Jessie Mine and Mill, which is another resource included in the inventory of 50 sites. Such a location will draw attention to the Jessie, which the inventory has recommended for stabilization and interpretation. The trailhead can, in essence, be used to draw public attention to the area's historic resources. Signage at the trailhead will alert the public to experience the historic resources farther up in the Gold Run Gulch.

Last, if the Jessie and the Peabody Placer sites are developed as heritage resources, then the trailhead can serve as a starting point for a self-guided tour of these and possibly a larger body of other historic points in the area.