

Gold Run Group: Prospect Complex
Site 5ST1226

The site encompasses a linear assemblage of prospect workings excavated on the western edge of the Gold Run Group of claims. The Gold Run Mining & Milling Company acquired the group in 1900 then drove the Lightburn Tunnel (5ST1225) to undercut it at great depth. The tunnel was abandoned in 1904 as a failure.

The site currently features pits, trenches, adits, and archaeological evidence of several structures. In a broad geographic sense, the site is located on the east side of Gold Run Gulch's upper portion. On a localized level, the site lies in a minor drainage that descends southwest into the gulch. The drainage features a permanent stream, steep walls, and a second-growth lodgepole pine forest. The site lies at approximately 10,160 feet elevation and is surrounded by a second-growth lodgepole pine forest.

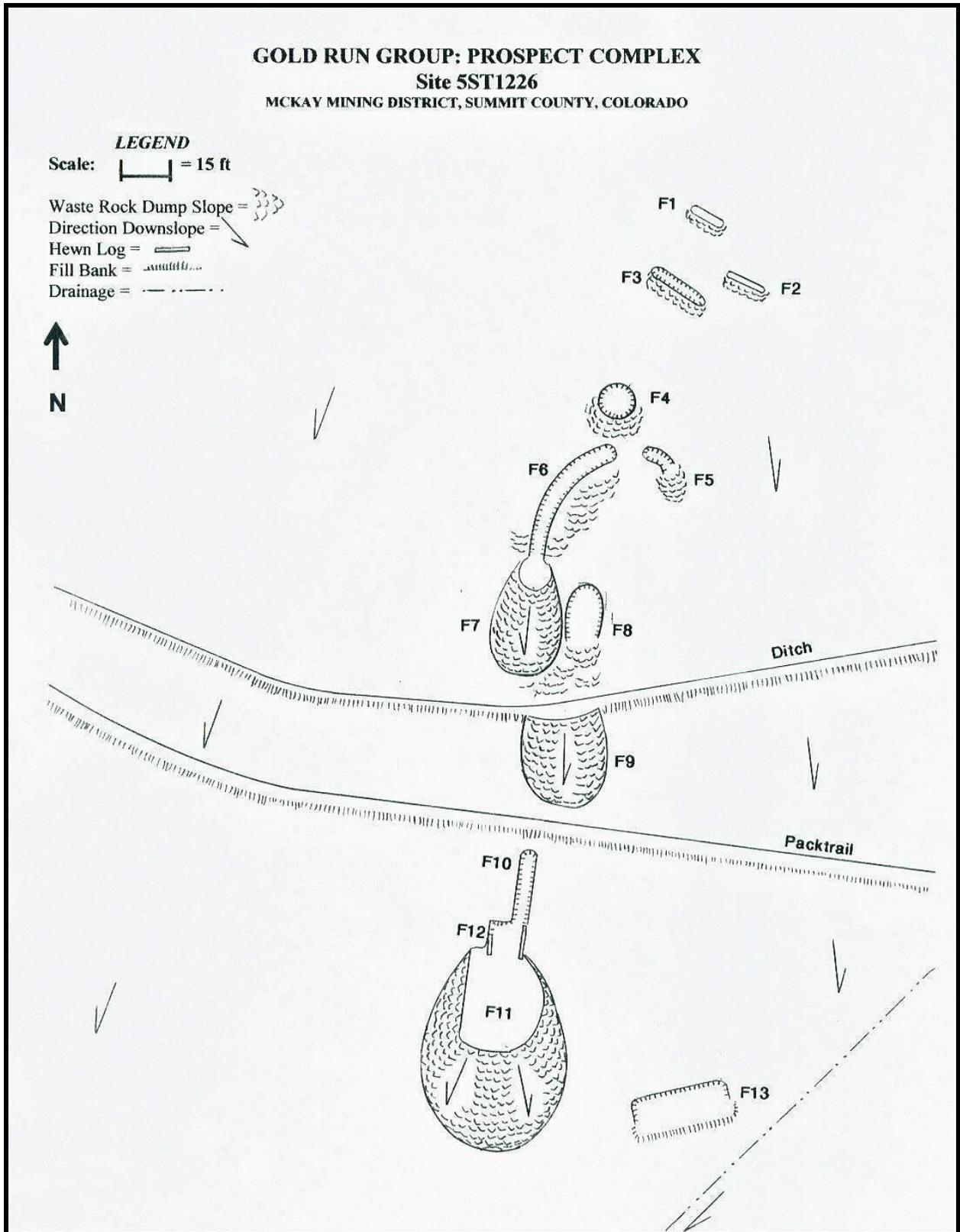


Figure 2.47: Plan view of a prospect complex site on the Gold Run Group.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Complex Site Description

It remains unknown exactly when prospectors first found the site's mineralized vein, but they excavated a series of workings to pinpoint it and track its strike. As was common, the prospectors started upslope and dug three trenches and a pit (F1-F4), confirming the vein's presence. The trenches ranged from 2 by 10 feet to 4 by 16 feet in area and were cross-cut prospects. In general, a cross-cut trench was oriented 90 degrees to a vein and its purpose to expose a cross-section of local geology.

The prospectors moved downslope and excavated two more trenches to refine their knowledge of the vein's location and strike. When considered together, the trenches (F5, F6) formed an arc designed to expose the area where the vein lay. It seems likely that the prospectors started F6 over where the vein was supposed be, and when they failed to expose the formation, they curved the trench to the northeast.

After the prospectors found the vein again, they drove a shallow adit (F10) to sample the mineral content at depth. Using a wheelbarrow, the prospectors dumped waste rock at the adit's mouth, forming a pad (F11) 42 by 60 feet in area and 5 feet thick.

When the prospectors drove the adit, they erected a simple tunnel house to enclose the adit portal and a blacksmith shop. The building, now gone, was a log structure 9 by 10 feet in area on a cut-and-fill platform (F12). Duff currently conceals artifacts.

The site featured a second building, which is gone, along a stream near the adit. Prospectors graded a cut-and-fill platform (F13) for a building, which was 12 by 27 feet in area. The structure may have served as a residence, although a poor artifact assemblage renders an exact interpretation uncertain. Duff and groundcover probably conceal most artifacts.

The site possesses an austere artifact assemblage limited primarily to structural debris associated with the adit. A combination of wire nails and a can assembled with soldered ends and a lapped side seam reflects an 1890s timeframe.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Complex Site Interpretation

The site represents an organized effort to find, define, and sample a mineralized vein. As was typical, prospectors first excavated trenches and pits to locate the vein and, when they were successful, the prospectors drove an adit to examine the vein's content at depth. In keeping with shallow exploratory efforts, the prospectors erected a simple surface plant that consisted of no more than a cramped blacksmith shop. The prospectors also used wheelbarrows to move materials through the adit because these were less expensive and cumbersome than ore cars. The light volume of artifacts, limited property development, and the adit's small waste rock dump indicate that the prospectors occupied the site briefly. The above characteristics in conjunction with the lack of an ore storage facility indicate that the vein failed to yield ore in meaningful volumes.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Complex Significance and Management Recommendations

The site is not a significant historic resource and is recommended ineligible for several reasons. First, the prospect complex is a common site type in Summit County and Colorado, and second, it possesses no important attributes. Last, the site's historical associations remain unclear because a poor artifact assemblage renders the site difficult to date. Management recommendations suggest no further consideration as a historic resource.