

***Gold Run Group: Prospect Adit
Site 5ST1227***

The site encompasses the archaeological remnants of a prospect adit driven in the western portion 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 an adit, its waste rock dump, and a collapsed tunnel house. The site lies on a moderately steep mountainside at 10,420 feet elevation above and east of the Lightburn Tunnel. The slope features a second-growth lodgepole pine forest, and a recreational trail passes below the site.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Adit Site Description

Prospectors drove the site's adit northeast to examine a mineralized vein at depth. After the site was abandoned, the adit portal (F1) collapsed, creating a linear area of subsidence. When prospectors drove the adit, they used wheelbarrows to dump waste rock outside the portal at first. Over time, they created a bench (F2) approximately 57 feet by 60 feet in area. Later, the prospectors used an ore car on a rail line and created a distinct lobe approximately 90 feet long superimposed over the original dump. Several rail ties and spikes currently remain.

The prospectors erected a log building at the adit portal to enclose a blacksmith shop and an ore-sorting area. The shop (F3), prior to collapse, was front-gabled, 15 feet 18 feet in area, and featured broad doorways in the southwest and northeast walls to permit the passage of ore cars. The prospectors assembled the walls with saddle-notch joints and chinked gaps with mud retained by log- and lumber strips. A gravel-filled wood box forge, 3 by 4 feet in area, stood in the building's west corner, and it denotes the blacksmith work area. After abandonment, the cabin's walls collapsed to a height of 4 feet. Vegetation and decayed logs in the interior conceal artifacts.

As was typical, the prospectors harvested local logs as timbers to support the adit. They reduced the logs to needed lengths then stacked these timbers at the base of the waste rock dump. One stack (F4) currently remains.

The site possesses a limited artifact assemblage, which is expected at prospect adits. Most of the items consisted of structural debris associated with the shop. Cut nails used to assemble the shop's primary woodwork indicate that it was erected during the 1880s, and wire nails reflect repairs after 1890.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Adit Site Interpretation

During the 1880s, prospectors identified a promising mineralized vein and drove the adit to sample the formation at depth. How they identified then defined the vein remains uncertain because no prospect pits or trenches were located upslope. The adit was a typical exploratory operation and possessed the most elementary facilities. Specifically, the prospectors erected a crude, log tunnel house that enclosed a blacksmith shop, a work area, and the adit portal. At first, the prospectors used wheelbarrows to haul waste rock out of the adit then installed an ore car. The small waste rock dump indicates that the adit was shallow, and the lack of an ore storage facility suggests that the prospectors failed to encounter ore in meaningful volumes. According to these characteristics and only a few artifacts, the operation was short-lived.

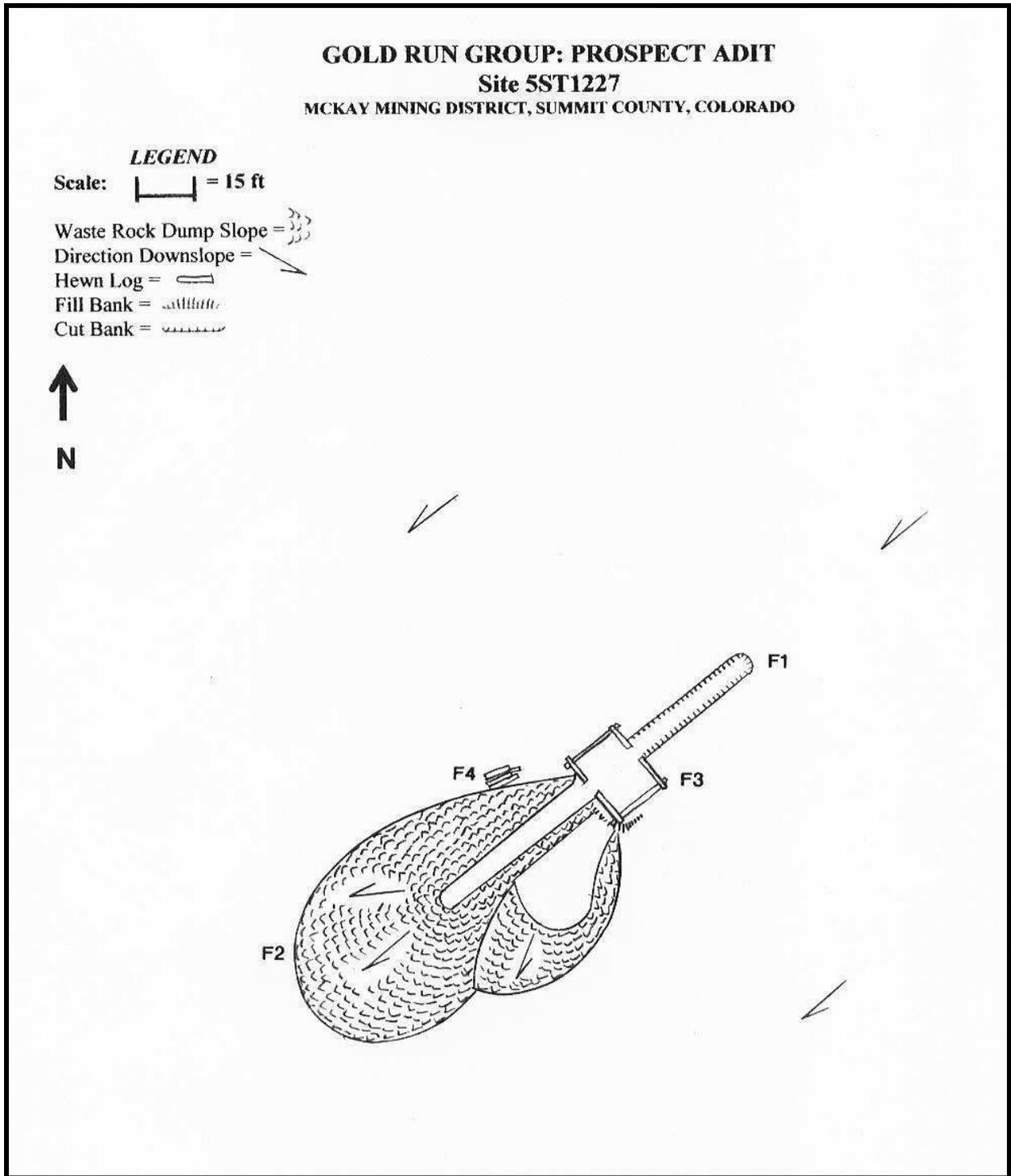


Figure 2.48: Plan view of a prospect adit site on the Gold Run Group.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Adit Site Significance

The site encompasses the archaeological remnants of a prospect adit driven during the 1880s and worked again sometime after 1890. The site retains a high degree of archaeological integrity, it has ambiance relative to prospecting during the 1880s, and it lies in an undisturbed setting. Because the site is an outstanding example of a prospect adit, it is recommended eligible for the NRHP and the SRHP under Criterion C.

In terms of Criterion C, the site is important because it exemplifies a typical prospect adit. According to archaeological features, the operation consisted of the adit, its waste rock dump, and a log tunnel house that enclosed a simple blacksmith shop. With such a feature assemblage, the site typifies many circa 1880s prospect adits in Summit County and greater Colorado. Prospect adits were fundamental to the success of Summit County's and Colorado's hardrock mining industry because they were one of the principal means that prospectors used to find economic ore formations. While the adit complex is a common site type, it is recommended eligible because the site is an outstanding archaeological example.

Gold Run Group: Prospect Adit Site Management Recommendations

Because the site appears to be stable and has little interpretive potential due to its isolation, the site requires no immediate management actions.