

Wellington Mine and Mill
Site 5ST390

Site 5ST390 encompasses the area where the Wellington Mine and Mill were located. The site, at around 9,920 feet elevation, lies on the north side of French Gulch 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. The gulch floor features French Creek, which meanders through extensive piles of dredge tailings. The site, currently known as the Wellington Mine and Mill, originally consisted of the Wellington Mine, the Oro Shaft and Tunnel, and the Wellington Mill. 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.



Figure 2.3: View of the Wellington site today. The trestle and foundations belonged to a mill that the Wellington Mine Association completed in 1962. The massive waste rock dump for the Oro tunnel and shaft stands behind. The site currently retains no historic integrity due to the alterations. Source: Author.

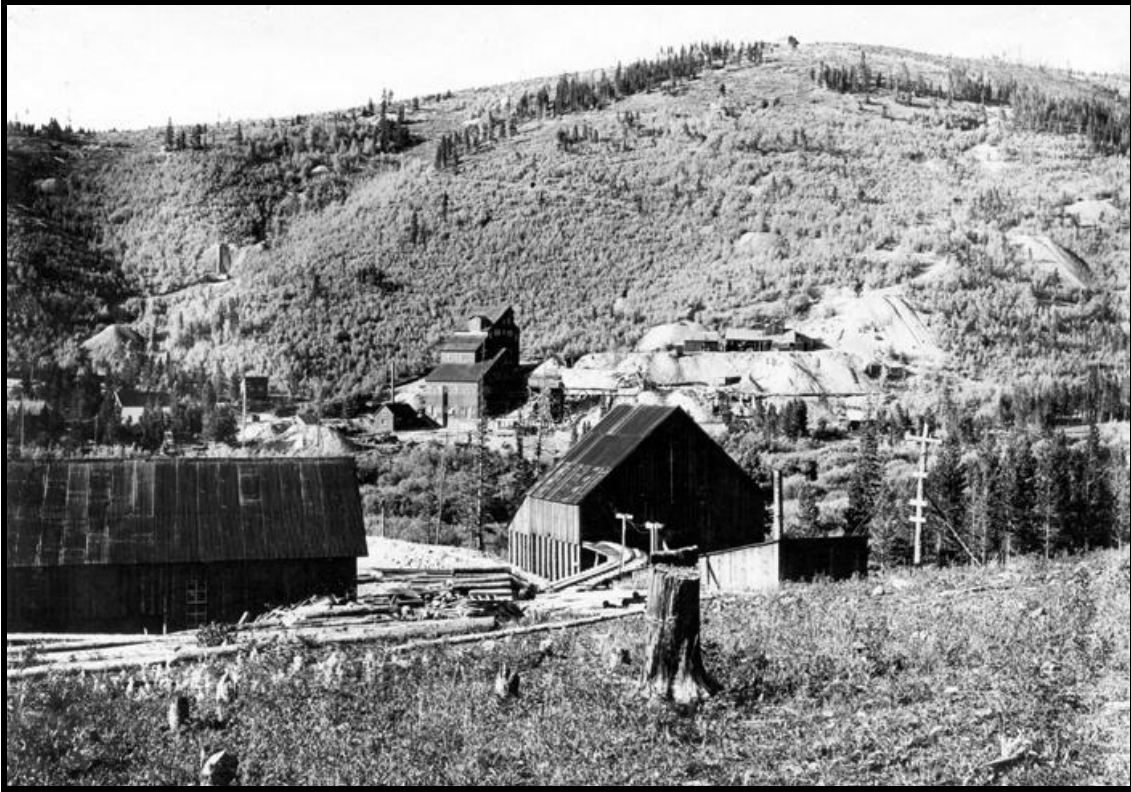


Figure 2.4: View north from the Country Boy Mine, foreground, at the Wellington, opposite slope, in 1909. The mill is left of center and the Oro Tunnel is right of center. Source: Ransome, 1911, Plate 27-A.



Figure 2.5: View east of the Wellington around 1912, shortly after a roasting and concentration plant, center, were added to the mill, left of center. Source: Denver Public Library, X-61039.

Wellington Mine and Mill Site Description

The site currently consists of four principal complexes including the Oro Shaft, the Oro Tunnel, the Wellington Mill, and several massive waste rock dumps. All have been bulldozed significantly or completely, and nearly all existing manifestations are less than fifty years old. Most of the site has been subjected to environmental remediation in the past and, during the summer of 2007, the site's lower portion was being reclaimed again.

The Oro Shaft complex consists of a capped shaft, a concrete foundation for the hoist and hoist house, and the associated waste rock dump. The shaft and hoist house foundation lie on a cut-and-fill platform, and the waste rock dump is 60 by 210 feet in area.

The Oro Tunnel complex features a tunnel portal, a concrete shop foundation, and several other machine foundations superimposed on the mine's main waste rock dump. The tunnel portal features a structure made out of welded pipes, corrugated sheet steel, and concrete. The shop foundation is 25 by 66 feet in area and features several machine mounts.

The mill complex, inaccessible due to heavy earthmoving, manifests as a terraced concrete foundation with a wooden ore-receiving bin at the head. The foundation features four terraces for, in process order, primary crushing, secondary crushing and screening, grinding, and concentration. Each terrace features concrete blocks and mounts for various machines.

The waste rock dump is massive and extends southeast and west from the shaft and tunnel. The dump is around 460 by 500 feet in area and 30 feet thick, and it has been completely bulldozed and the surface paved with river alluvium as a stabilizer.

Wellington Mine and Mill Site Significance and Management Recommendations

Between 1896 and 1929, the Wellington Mine and Mill were among the Breckenridge area's most important operations. Today, the site retains no historical integrity relative to the above timeframe, or any other, due to extensive bulldozing and earthmoving. 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.