

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

APR 18 1991

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name China Ditch  
other names/site number Upper Ditch Segment, China Ditch

2. Location

street & number N/A N/A not for publication  
city, town Myrtle Creek  vicinity  
state Oregon code OR county Douglas code 019 zip code 97457

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
John S. Jorgensen, Preservation Officer 4/10/91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
USDI - Bureau of Land Management  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
James M. Harrison 2/11/91  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet. Antoinette J. Lee 5/22/91  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

JA Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Ditch to transport water for hydraulic  
mining

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Abandoned

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**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

---

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

---

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
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John S. Searles, Preservation Officer 4/10/91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
USDI - Bureau of Land Management  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
James M. Smith 2/11/91  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Autawilla of Lee 5/22/91  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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	United States	Forest	Umpqua National Forest
	Department of	Service	PO Box 1008
	Agriculture		Roseburg, OR 97470 (503) 672-6601

REPLY TO: 2360

SUBJECT: China Ditch NRHP Nomination

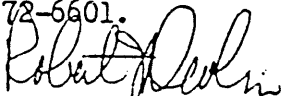
TO: Dick Norlin  
 South Umpqua Resource Area Manager  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 777 Garden Valley Blvd  
 Roseburg, Oregon 97470

December 16, 1988

SEARCHED	INDEXED	SERIALIZED	FILED
NOV 18 1988			
FBI			
Received Roseburg			BLM GRC
Miller		N. Ump	
Crain		P. Ump	
<i>Barner</i>			
		Labifer	

We have been asked by BLM Archaeologist Isaac Barner to notify you if we support the efforts of Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham to include the U.S.F.S portion of the Historic Property known as the China Ditch in the Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

We support your efforts to include our portion of this Historic Property in the Nomination. If you need further technical input, please call Vance Carlson at 672-6601.

  
 ROBERT J. DEVLIN  
 Forest Supervisor

cc: Ned Davis



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7. Description

The China Ditch survives in 1989, a century after developers laid plans for its construction, as a discontinuous but recognizable historical cultural resource in Douglas County, Oregon. The original mining development began with a Lower Ditch of 2.5 miles and a second ditch of undetermined length. The location of the lower ditches is not well documented, though segments remain and are addressed in the BLM Management Plan (2/27/1984) with mitigation of logging practices through mapping and photography. The Upper Ditch of 33 miles reached from Tuttle Creek on the east to Weaver Gulch on North Myrtle Creek. The Lower Ditch predated the Upper Ditch and is not part of this nomination nor was it a contiguous part of the Upper China Ditch. The Upper China Ditch (hereinafter referred to as the China Ditch) measured three feet wide on the bottom, five feet wide at the top, and was designed to carry two feet of water (Douglas County Clerk 1895).

Although portions of the ditch have been obliterated through road construction, earth slippages, tree throws, and clearcuts, substantial portions of this feature remain and are identified on the following tracts of BLM land:

Township	Range	Section	Subdivision	Estimated Acres
28S	4W	2	NE $\frac{1}{4}$	.8
28S	4W	14	NE $\frac{1}{4}$	2.6
28S	4W	11	E $\frac{1}{2}$	6.3
28S	4W	1	-	13.3
27S	3W	31	S $\frac{1}{2}$	3.9
28S	3W	7	NW $\frac{1}{4}$	2.1
28S	3W	5	S $\frac{1}{2}$	6.3
Total:				35.3

Six, largely undisturbed, intermittent sections of the China Ditch are located on the Umpqua National Forest.

Township	Range	Section	Subdivision	Estimated Acres
28S	2W	18	-	2.8

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These segments, measuring 4,000 feet, are included with the BLM nomination as part of a discontinuous, linear cultural resource.

Special features associated with the China Ditch included the following:

- ° Flume, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 9, T28S, R3W, W.M.
- ° Flume, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 2, T28S, R4W, W.M.
- ° Tunnel, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 7, T28S, R3W, W.M.

Neither of the flumes is intact. The tunnel is caved in but was a significant engineering feature which carried water through the mountain at the head of Cooperhead Creek at an elevation of 2,135 feet. The BLM has not succeeded in locating the portals for the tunnel.

The route is marked by the excavated ditch which consists of a graded or cut uphill face, the ditch, and the downhill fill, including a lip of debris placed during the excavation of the feature. At a number of locations a series of decaying stumps, some which possess springboard slots, confirm the work of removing timber, either to open a right-of-way or to provide lumber for shoring and flumes. At places, especially in ravines, the ditch is washed-out but, its course remains recognizable. Vegetation has encroached on the ditch and, in many places, the passage of nearly a century has filled the excavation with limbs and debris. The most serious negative impacts have resulted from logging and road construction prior to 1979.

Over the years local residents salvaged materials used in the construction of the China Ditch. Fred Asam (1883-1977) homesteaded on Myrtle Creek in 1909 and began working for the Umpqua National Forest in 1914. In 1968 Asam described the ditch and said: "Where they had to cross a deep gulley or something like that, they put some pipes in. I got some of that pipe--it was 30" pipe--iron pipe--and I got two or three lengths and put it on my fireplace for a chimney, for my homestead. We packed it out from there, across the creek and up the other side of the hill" (Asam 1968:2).

The China Ditch may possess heretofore undiscovered archaeological features associated with the construction camps inhabited in the early 1890s by the contract workers, including Chinese laborers, who worked on the project. Referring to a trip along the abandoned ditch in 1913 or

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1914, Asam recalled: "We could see some of the camps where they had camped. Right there where they came over the divide, just a little bit up there is a little bit of flat country, not very much, they had a camp there. Big sugar pine trees were growing in there. They had a sawmill up there." Asam stated that the Chinese operated a sawmill to cut lumber for the flumes along the ditch and that Scott Morrison later removed the flumes to salvage lumber to build a house on his homestead (Asam 1968:3).

For a decade the BLM Roseburg District and the Umpqua National Forest have maintained a documentation and protection program which has secured the materials for this nomination. Both of these federal agencies have sought to preclude negative impacts on the resource. It is the recommendation of the Roseburg BLM District and the Umpqua National Forest that the discontinuous segments of the China Ditch herein described and on federal lands be nominated to the National Register.



**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry: mining/gold mining

Period of Significance

1890-1894

Significant Dates

1890

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Myrtle Creek Consolidated Hydraulic Gold  
Mining and Manufacturing Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: Bureau of Land Management  
Roseburg District Office; USDA Forest Service, Umpqua National Forest, Roseburg

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property 38.1 Dixonville; Red Butte, Oregon 1:62500

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>501650</u>	<u>4774900</u>	B	<u>10</u>	<u>501150</u>	<u>4775800</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>10</u>	<u>501100</u>	<u>4776300</u>	D	<u>10</u>	<u>500750</u>	<u>4776350</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated area is located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 14, T28S, R4W, W.M.; E $\frac{1}{2}$  Sec. 11, T28S, R4W, W.M.; NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 2, T28S, R4W, W.M.; Sec. 1, T28S, R4W, W.M.; S $\frac{1}{2}$  Sec. 31, T27S, R3W, W.M.; NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 7, T28S, R3W, W.M.; S $\frac{1}{2}$  Sec. 5, T28S, R3W, W.M.; Sec. 18, T28S, R2W, W.M.; and is more particularly described as a corridor 30 feet wide, measuring 15 feet from either side of the center of the trace of the China Ditch.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The nominated area includes the historical cultural resource and a corridor of 15 feet to each side of the center. The route of the ditch involved no human transportation or any particular maintenance of setting. The ditch passed around hills, through logged areas, and terminated in a setting of major disruption: hydraulic mining and placers on North Myrtle Creek.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Stephen Dow Beckham, Historian  
organization BLM Oregon State Office date August 1989  
street & number 1300 NE 144 Street/P.O. Box 2965 telephone 503-280-7065  
city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97208

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## 8. Statement of Significance

The China Ditch, a historic feature constructed in the 1890s in the Western Cascades of Douglas County, Oregon, meets Criterion A for the National Register of Historic Places. This feature is "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history" and has long been recognized as significant to the local community and the county wherein it is located. Although not as well known regionally, the China Ditch is probably the second-longest feature constructed in Oregon in the nineteenth century for the development of placer mining. The China Ditch was certainly the most ambitious and longest such diversion of water for mining purposes in the western half of Oregon. Its name further confirms that the feature is associated with Chinese immigrants who played an important role in the development of placer mines in the last half of the nineteenth century.

The genesis of the China Ditch came in the fall of 1889 when miners gathered in Myrtle Creek, Oregon, to plan for the development of 2,000 acres of placers in the watershed of North Myrtle Creek. Since 1852 Myrtle Creek, Cow Creek, and Coffee Creek--tributaries of the South Umpqua River--had yielded promising deposits of placer gold. Over the years miners worked and reworked the placers, moving tons of gravel and rock, diverting water, and seeking elusive paydirt in crevices and potholes in the beds of the streams. Miners located placers as well as quartz deposits on North Myrtle Creek in the 1870s. The Eagle Gold and Silver Mining Company filed in 1874 on 1,500 feet of quartz claims between Weaver's Gulch and Cox's Gulch in sections 14 and 23 of T28S, R4W, W.M. The Mohawk Gold and Silver Mining Company filed on several claims near the Cox Gulch diggings that same year. These and other prospects, however, languished for nearly a decade before interest renewed in the late 1880s (Hanes 1979).

By 1889 miners were convinced that the hillsides of North Myrtle Creek would yield good returns provided that large-scale hydraulic mining removed the earth and processed the materials in sluices. The only way to mount such a project, they concluded, was to divert water from Little River (the East Umpqua) and bring it along the ridges for 33 miles to the placers.

During the winter of 1889-90 survey crews under R. C. Ward studied the feasibility of such a project and ascertained that it would be

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possible to tap Little River to divert water west into the drainage of North Myrtle. The surveyors estimated that a difference of nearly 300 feet between the head of the diversion and the outfall of the ditch on Myrtle Creek insured the success of the venture. Dr. L. W. Brown, a resident of Lane County and president of the Myrtle Creek Consolidated Hydraulic Gold Mining and Manufacturing Company (MCCHGMMC) announced in May, 1890, that he would hire 400 men to begin construction (Bakken 1968:68-69).

In the summer and fall of 1890 the company began acquisitions of mining property and water rights. On August 29 it purchased for \$1,000 the western half of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 23, T28S, R4W, W.M. from T. B. and Sophia Speake. This property on North Myrtle Creek included "one mining claim of twenty acres being situated at the Mouth of Summit Gulch" as well as all ditches and improvements (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[23]:382). On September 29 it acquired from E. J. Davis for \$280,325 "all the placer mines and appurtenances thereto belonging and situated upon the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 13, the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of sec. 14, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 15, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 22 and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  and N $\frac{1}{2}$  of the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of sec. 23" and all water rights associated with those claims in T28S, R4W, W.M. (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[31]:124). The company further purchased for \$1,000 the lands of S. M. Howard in section 27 in this same township on November 21 (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[31]:23). Thus in a period of less than 90 days the MCCHGMMC spent \$322,324 on mining claims and water rights on North Myrtle Creek.

Ward, the project engineer, began sale of stock in the MCCHGMMC in October, 1890. The company capitalized with 25,000 shares at \$25.00 each, selling them, however, at \$5.00. The promoters stated that "an absolutely non-assessable certificate was given each purchaser so that a big per cent of profit would be made should the mines prove as rich as prospect indicated" (Bakken 1968:68).

During the fall of 1890 a crew of 80 men constructed seven miles of ditch, sufficient for other laborers to build sluice boxes, headgates, and install 2,000 feet of pipes for the hydraulic "giants." In November 65 men were at work and the estimated monthly payroll rose to \$4,000. The newspaper summary of activities at the end of December claimed that 150 men were working on the ditch which would carry 1,000 inches of water for over 20 miles. Further, the promoters had introduced two new ingredients into the project. The ditch and flumes would carry logs out of the mountains to new sash and door factories in Myrtle Creek and the water would irrigate the prune orchards of Henry

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Adams, John Hall, John Weaver, Jake Chadwick, W. A. Gridley, James Burnett, and others. "Who shall say that Myrtle Creek has not a future? Man, if you are looking for a place to invest some of your surplus, why not come to Myrtle Creek," noted the Roseburg Review.

Two nozzles or "giants" began washing the hillsides in January, 1891. Optimism mounted when Louis Catching, a local resident and claim owner, cleared \$900 in nine week's time from a working merely with a "rocker" and gold pan. Catching sold his claim to the MCCHGMMC and contracted to excavate the next section of the ditch. When the miners completed a "clean up" of gold in April the officials of the company announced that they had secured over \$2,000 in a "short run." They declared a dividend of \$.47/share and put on display in Eugene a jar of gold reportedly taken from the diggings. These events encouraged more stock sales (Bakken 1968:70-71).

In June, 1891, the MCCHGMMC hired 100 Chinese laborers for further development of the ditch. Their assignment was to widen the excavation, tap four new creeks, and to extend the ditch farther east to Little River (the East Umpqua) in the Upper Cavitt Creek region. Lavola Bakken, historian of these events, wrote:

The Chinese laborers who gave the project its local name of 'China Ditch,' batched along the ditch, advancing their camps as they worked. Dr. B. F. Fallin of Myrtle Creek said there were 200 Chinese working for the company before the end of the summer of 1891. Wm. H. Bond and A. W. Stephens ran six pack horses to the mines, carrying provisions and tools to the ditch crews and miners. In October the Chinese tunneled 400 feet through a ridge to connect the new ditch with the old (Bakken 1968:71).

On June 16 and 18, 1891, L. W. Brown, one of the principal developers, sold by quitclaim deed all of his interests to the MCCHGMMC. In the first transaction he disposed of the following:

Seven claims each of 600 feet wide by 300 feet up and down in the Ravine in Rich Gulch, also nine claims each 600 feet by 300 feet up and down Richardson Gulch. Also five claims hill claims on the left hand of Wrights Gulch each 200 yards wide and 500 yards long.

Also eight claims, each 200 yards wide and 100 yards long, on the head of Weaver Gulch. Also a water ditch about four miles long, and running from Slate Creek to the head of Weaver Ravine, together with all water rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

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The sale included lands in sections 23 and 26 of T28S, R4W, W.M. The agreement called for payment of \$5,000 to Brown. Two days later he secured \$208,325 for his "undivided one third" interest in placers and other mines in sections 13, 14, 15, 22, and 23 in T28S, R4W, W.M., along with all water rights (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[24]:265-267). The MCCHGMMC also purchased 140 acres for \$400.00 from J. S. and Susan Dunnivan in section 13 on September 30, 1891 (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[26]:381). These two transactions and those of the previous year amounted to the expenditure of \$553,649 for mining properties and water rights.

The labors of the Chinese in 1891 presumably increased the water flow so much that three mining shifts, working 24 hours a day, operated the two "giants." The "clean ups" reportedly yielded thousands of dollars in gold. The Chinese completed their labors and departed in December, 1891, and the MCCHGMMC announced that it would operate three "giants" henceforth on a day and night basis (Anonymous 1891).

In March, 1892, H. W. Holden secured a contract to build another six miles of the ditch in the vicinity of the claim of Bob Cavitt. Holden's labors required the construction of flumes to carry the water around the rocky hillsides. He installed a portable sawmill to cut the lumber and beams for the flumes. When Holden completed his contract the ditch was still three miles short of Little River, the target source for a consistent supply of water for the placers nearly 30 miles to the west. The MCCHGMMC had expended nearly \$85,000 by the end of 1892 in development work (Bakken 1968:71-72).

The MCCHGMMC secured one further property on August 25, 1893. The company purchased for \$1.00 the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 22 in T28S, R4W, W.M. The sellers were F. M. Gabbert, J. W. Weaver, Willis Kramer, George Dement, and John Weaver of Myrtle Creek (Douglas County Clerk n.d.[32]:47).

The mining concentrated in T28S, R4W, W.M., in six sections in the drainages of Lee Creek, Buck Fork, and the main North Myrtle Creek. Joseph Silas Diller, geologist for the U. S. Geological Survey, visited the Buck Fork Placers in the 1890s and reported that a ditch of nearly 40 miles tapped Cavitt Creek. The miners labored in placers in the valley floor as well as on south slopes near the summit of the ridge between Lee Creek and Buck Fork. Diller estimated that the production in this area and in the Casteel placers on Lee Creek amounted to about \$150,000 (Diller 1898; Ramp 1972:33).

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The year 1893 proved a turning point for the fortunes of the developers of the China Ditch. In April the MCCHGMMC had men operating four "giants" in spite of the three miles left to complete the ditch to Little River. The officials estimated that the water from other small creeks would enable them to keep mining until July and that further construction would link to Little River by fall. H. W. Holden secured election as company president in May. The firm brought in an expert named Stanley from San Francisco to assess the mine. Disaster struck, however, when the Circuit Court in Douglas County issued a writ of attachment on behalf of A. E. Wood on June 2. The writ enumerated the various claims and lands of the MCCHGMMC and all the water drawn by the MCCHGMMC ditch from the following creeks: Copper Head, White Rock, West Fork of Smith Creek, Smith Creek, White Water, Camp Creek, Little Flat and Big Flat creeks, Fall Creek, and Boulder Creek. The writ specified both ditches and flumes "3 ft on the bottom 5 ft on the top and 2 ft deep" (Douglas County Clerk 1893). Within a few days J. F. Robinson, L. W. Brown, Fisher & Watkins, and C. E. White also sought attachments of the company's properties (Anonymous 1893a).

Among those seeking the assets of the MCCHGMMC was J. H. Foreman who claimed to represent employees who had some \$4,220 in overdue wages. As the claimants stepped forward, some filed further writs of attachment and others began action against L. W. Brown, the former company president (Anonymous 1893b). The court ordered the county sheriff to guard the property until the court could settle affairs. Sheriff Dillard, however, concluded to "clean up" the latest placer efforts rather than maintaining a guard at the site. The "giants" had washed for 16 days but when the men collected the gold they found but 9.2 ounces or a return of about \$165.00. Angry stockholders accused Brown of "salting" the mine and keeping up "appearances" by employing too large a crew to operate the "giants" (Bakken 1968:75).

At the sheriff's sale of October 19-20, 1894, J. A. McMurry purchased the assets of the MCCHGMMC for \$7,690.59 as high bidder. McMurry secured all of the mining claims as well as "two and one half miles of ditch, Lower ditch, thirty-three miles of ditch on Upper Creek, commencing at Boulder [Tuttle ?] Creek and ending at Weaver Gulch" (Douglas County Clerk 1895:5-10). Dr. Brown, the promoter of the China Ditch and the North Myrtle placers survived these legal problems, continued his medical practice in Eugene, invested and speculated in the Bohemia mines, and subsequently served as a principal in the Eugene Theatre Company which built a \$30,000 opera house at the turn of the twentieth century (Anonymous 1903:1096).

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Four years of hard labor and speculation led to limited returns, unpaid wages, and bankruptcy for the ambitiously named Myrtle Creek Consolidated Hydraulic Gold Mining and Manufacturing Company. Historian Bakken observed: "Myrtle Creek miners returned to their one-man gold rockers; farmers, who weren't excited by the gold talk in the first place, planted more prune trees; and the people on the East Umpqua [Little River], if they had ever been worried at all, relaxed." The ambitions to divert the waters to the Myrtle Creek placers faded as did the fortunes of the investors in these schemes. The China Ditch alone remained--a prominent trace of human ambition, engineering, and speculation on the lower slopes of the Western Cascades.

Parts of the China Ditch possibly continued in use into the twentieth century. In 1916 H. M. Parks and A. M. Swartley assessed the placers of the Casteel Mines Company on North Myrtle Creek. The firm had 160 acres of claims in sections 14, 15, and 22. The geologists noted that the owners had worked all claims in the preceding four years and had secured sufficient gold to meet expenses including work on ditches and dams. The miners operated two "giants" which drew water from 1,200 feet of pipe. The geologists noted: "The company plans to build a large ditch 15 miles long, which will take in some 10 or 12 small creeks, and with plenty of rain or snow will be able then to run 7 or 8 months every year" (Parks and Swartley 1916:52).

Perhaps only one other water diversion project for mining--the Eldorado Ditch of Baker and Malheur counties--has greater significance in Oregon. Constructed between 1863-74, this ditch and flume system extended for 136 miles and operated until 1925 (Preston 1982; Wheeler and Kraft 1982). While the China Ditch dated to a later period and possessed lesser length, it played an important role in the mining technology of southwestern Oregon. The project drew scores of laborers, including many Chinese. While the Chinese remain anonymous figures, lost because of the lack of specific historical records identifying individuals and their labors on North Myrtle, the name "China Ditch" evokes their role in the mining frontiers of the nineteenth century American West. The traces of the old ditch bespeak a time when ambition and speculation led hopeful investors to try their fortunes in securing the golden wealth of southwestern Oregon.



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## 10. Geographical Data

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<u>Point</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	10	501650	4774900
B	10	501150	4775800
C	10	501100	4776300
D	10	500750	4776350
E	10	494000	4777900
F	10	493500	4778300
G	10	493150	4777900
H	10	493100	4777900
I	10	493200	4778250
J	10	492900	4778200
K	10	493000	4778650
L	10	492600	4778700
M	10	491750	4778900
N	10	491400	4777750
O	10	491450	4777900
P	10	491200	4778400
Q	10	490750	4778250
R	10	491200	4778550
S	10	492300	4779450
T	10	491650	4779600
U	10	491850	4780100
V	10	491300	4780050
W	10	491000	4779300
Y	10	490650	4779450
Z	10	490450	4778900
AA	10	490000	4779450
BB	10	489750	4779450
CC	10	489800	4779300
DD	10	489400	4779100
EE	10	489900	4778700
FF	10	489550	4778400
GG	10	489550	4778200
HH	10	489400	4777700
II	10	489000	4777650
JJ	10	488900	4775400

Photograph number key for photographs 1 to 5  
in T285, R3W, section 5  
China Ditch (B.M. - Roseburg District, Oregon)

