

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Chilkoot Trail and Dyea
other names/site number Chilkoot Trail and Dyea Site

2. Location

street & number in Taiya River valley not for publication
city, town Skagway vicinity
state Alaska code AK county Skagway-Angoon Yakutat DIVISION code 231 zip code N/A

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>19</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>30</u>	<u>21</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.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

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.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) NHL Boundary Study

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action 11/4/92

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
pedestrian-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture
outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Earth/Log
walls Wood

roof Wood

other (wharves/bridges) Log
(tramways) Wood/Iron/Wire

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Dyea, located at the mouth of the Taiya River valley, is five miles by air northwest of Skagway. From there it is sixteen and one-half miles north to the top of the Chilkoot Pass, where the U.S.-Canada boundary lies. During the 1897-1899 gold rush, thousands travelled up the valley's Chilkoot Trail, and as a result many improvements were erected. Dyea erupted from a trading post to major port. Three large trailside communities and two smaller clusters of tents and shacks sprang into life on the U.S. side of the trail. Three aerial trams, several surface trams and a telephone-telegraph line were further improvements seen along the way. Artifacts seen today are strewn from Dyea to the pass; only the largest or those considered most significant are listed below.

Contributing Resources

1) Dyea Townsite. In the spring of 1898, Dyea's 8000 residents stretched out two miles above the high tide line. Businesses were scattered along the Chilkoot Trail, and the town boasted a Native village, a military camp, two wharves and a sawmill. After June 1898, however, Dyea quickly faded and was abandoned shortly after 1900. In the intervening years some buildings have collapsed, others were dismantled and removed, others were destroyed, and still others were undermined by Taiya River floods. The townsite was the site of truck gardening and dairying from 1900 to the 1930s. Remnants date from both the gold rush and the homestead eras. They include over 250 features: at least ten building ruins, plus structural scatters, foundations pits, and individual artifacts. Major features are listed below.

a) Dyea's Long Wharf. The remnants of Dyea's largest wharf now consist of approximately 150 round vertical posts, most less than two feet high. Pilings were placed three abreast (approximately 14 feet between east and west posts). The known length of the wharf was approximately 7600 feet. The north and south ends of the wharf, however, never connected, and a nearly 2400 foot gap exists between the northern and southern sets of pilings.

b) Vining and Wilkes Warehouse, Dyea. This 50x100 two-story building once stood at the corner of 1st Avenue and West Street. It collapsed in 1952-53, and is now a scatter of boards and logs choked by fireweed, grasses and encroaching spruce growth. Some lumber has been lost to campfires.

c) Dyea False Front. This was the gold rush era A.M. Gregg real estate office which once stood on Main Street between 4th

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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Exploration-Settlement

1880-1900

Transportation

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

The Chilkoot Trail and the Dyea Site are open air museums commemorating one of the most thrilling events in 19th Century North American history. Because of the fame and drama brought on by the Klondike gold rush, the eyes of the world looked between 1897 and 1900 toward the lands that comprise this National Historic Landmark. Both the historical significance of the rush, and the number and quality of the remains from that period are recognized as important aspects of the landmark's heritage. Within the landmark's boundaries are a large "ghosted" port town, several gold rush era trails, the remains of various towns and camps, and many artifacts located outside of the population centers.

The Taiya River valley was an active transportation route long before the wild events of the rush of 1897-98 took place. Until the 1870s, Chilkoot Pass divided the coastal Tlingit Indians from the Interior Athabaskan Indians, and for hundreds of years the valley witnessed seasonal travelling. Along this route, the dominant Tlingits carried trade goods back and forth across the Coast Mountains. They held a rigid monopoly over the route. Both the Russians and other early Europeans traded with the Tlingits, and indirectly considered the trail to be part of their own trading networks. Although the first known non-Native to cross the pass, George Holt, did so during the 1870s, the Native stranglehold over the pass was not broken until 1880. That year, U.S. Navy Commander Lester A. Beardslee pressured the Tlingits into sharing the trail with exploring and prospecting parties.

Between 1880 and 1897, the Chilkoot Trail was one of two primary links connecting coastal Alaska with the upper Yukon River drainage. Expeditions using the route included those of Frederick Schwatka, Dr. Willis Everette, William Olgivie, and the Alaska Boundary Survey of 1894.² Less publicized were the steadily increasing number of prospectors who headed north over the trail each spring and returned in the fall. By 1886, the number of prospectors had grown to the point that John J. Healy and his brother-in-law Edgar Wilson established a trading post at the mouth of the Taiya River. Here a seasonal Tlingit village had long existed.³ Because the Natives were valued as packers,

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 # AK-16, AK-29, AK-30
- 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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 11,882

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting					Northing					

B

Zone	Easting					Northing					

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank Norris, Historian

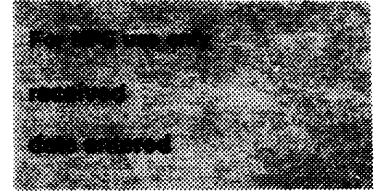
organization National Park Service (ARO) date August 1, 1987

street & number 2525 Gambell Street telephone 907-257-2661

city or town Anchorage state Alaska zip code 99503-2892

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Land Ownership Within Nominated Area, as of September 11, 1987

The National Park Service owns several parcels at the southern end of the nominated area. These parcels are included in Sections 15, 22, and 27 of T25S, R59e, CRM. They include the former Pullen and Matthews homesteads, plus certain lots on the former Wilson homestead (USS 1516). They are specifically noted on attached Map A.

Private parties own several parcels in Sections 15, 22, and 27 of T27S, R59E, CRM. Their names and parcel numbers follow:

Elliot, Willard	USS 1516, Lot 6 and portion Lot 7
Burton, Robert	USS 1516, portion Lot 7
McDermott, John	USS 1516, Lot 13
Klavick, Alf	USS 1515, Lot 14
Alexander, Karen	USS 3341, North 1 acre
Blanchard, Gordon & Lois	USS 3341, South 4 acres
Moe, Malcom	USS, 3414

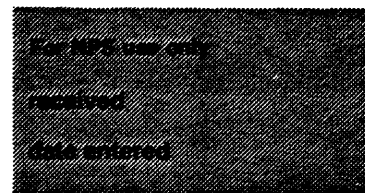
The State of Alaska owns the remainder of the nominated lands. Management activities are carried on by a co-operative agreement between the State of Alaska and the National Park Service. These lands are shown on USGS quadrangles Skagway B-1 and Skagway C-1.

At the present time, there are six active Native allotment applications within the Unit. They are located in Sec. 35, T26S, R59E, and in Sections 2, 3, 27, 28, 33, and 34, T27S, R59E, CRM. The specific location of these parcels is noted on attached maps A and B. They are listed below.

Mahle, Fred O.	USS 5106C,	NA Appln. AA 6529
Mahle, Harlan L. estate	USS 5107B,	NA Appln. AA 6528
Mahle, Andrew C. estate	USS 5108,	NA Appln. AA 6272
Matthews, James M., Jr.	USS 5109	NA Appln. AA 7876
Sullivan, Richard E.	USS 5109	NA Appln. AA 8308
Sullivan, Larry O.	USS 5109	NA Appln. AA 8721

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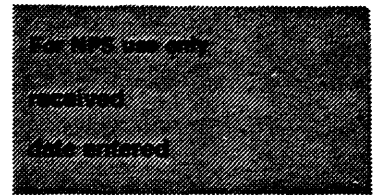
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Representation in Other Surveys

- 1) Dyea Site, Alaska Heritage Resource Survey #SKG-006
Date: June 30, 1974
By: Alaska Division of Parks
- 2) Chilkoot Trail, Alaska Heritage Resource Survey #SKG-067
Date: December 14, 1974
By: Alaska Division of Parks
- 3) Dyea Site, National Register of Historic Places
Nominated: December 30, 1975
By: Joan Antonson, Alaska Division of Parks
Approved: January 22, 1976
By: Russell Cahill, State Historic Preservation Officer
- 4) Chilkoot Trail, National Register of Historic Places
Nominated: January 3, 1976
By: Joan Antonson, Alaska Division of Parks
Approved: January 22, 1976
By: Russell Cahill, State Historic Preservation Officer
- 5) Dyea and Chilkoot Trail (Historical Survey)
Date: 1980
By: Robert Spude, NPS, Skagway (see Bibliography)
- 6) Dyea, Chilkoot Trail and White Pass (Archaeological Survey)
Date: 1981 (field work performed 1979)
By: Caroline Carley, NPS, Skagway (see Bibliography)
- 7) Klondike Gold Rush NHP, National Register of Historic Places
Date: 1987
By: Frank Norris, NPS, Skagway
- 8) Chilkoot Trail (Historic Structure Report)
Date: 1985 (draft), in preparation (final)
By: Frank Norris and Carol Taylor, NPS, Skagway (see Bibliography)

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and 5th Avenues. The sides and rear of the building collapsed about 1960, but the false front is intact, propped up by a horizontal 2x6 board suspended between adjacent trees. Scattered debris can be seen nearby, and a line of spruce trees dating from 1900-1910 is collinear with the false front. No evidence remains of once-busy Main Street.

d) Dyea Collapsing Structure. A collapsing single-story building, with basement, are the remains of a structure that was once 28 feet long and 20 feet wide, with multi-gable and shed roofs. Only portions of the walls stand today; other walls have collapsed. It was located on gold-rush Broadway north of 4th Avenue. Because of its basement, it may have been a tavern.

e) Dyea (or Native) Cemetery. This plot of ground witnessed burials from 1898 to 1921. Perhaps 30 to 50 persons were interred here, but the identity of most has been lost. In the 1970s, the cemetery became endangered by the encroaching Taiya River; therefore, nine of the ten identified bodies were removed to the nearby Slide Cemetery. A single headboard, a low cement border, and metal piping are seen at the site today; slight mounds and depressions marks possible burial sites.

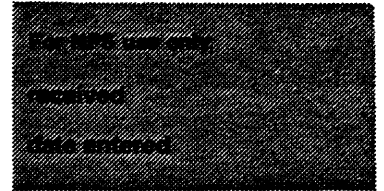
f) Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company Wagon Road. This road, approximately two and one-half miles long, connected the small DKT dock with Dyea. This north-south route parallels the west side of Taiya Inlet, remaining 200 to 300 feet above the inlet for most of its right-of-way. It was constructed in January and early February 1898, and consisted of a rough track and a pile bridge at the north end. It was intermittently used for the next eighteen months, then abandoned. Portions of the road can still be followed today, and several of the bridge pilings are seen in and near Nelson Creek.

g) Pullen Barn, Dyea. This structure, which measured approximately 20 feet square, was probably built during the gold rush. It was originally adjacent to the residence of Bob Wright, a prospector and laborer who lived there from 1894 to 1902. It was intermittently used as a barn for several decades, but was often vacant. It collapsed during the winter of 1982-83; its constituent materials have rapidly decayed since that time.

h) Slide Cemetery, Dyea. Forty-five wooden grave markers, enclosed in a modern wooden enclosure, demarcate the burial sites of victims of the snow slide of April 3, 1898. Several of the

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original headboards have been lost; others are illegible. At least one has been moved to its present site. Approximately fifty yards east of the enclosure, nine other graves are found; these were moved from Dyea Cemetery in 1978.

i) Native Village, Dyea. This cultural site predates the gold rush. It consisted of 12 log or brush houses in 1895, and ballooned into a large Native community in the fall of 1897. Gold rush businesses soon invaded the village. Much of the original site has been devoured by the shifting Taiya River; remaining is a quarter mile stretch of the Chilkoot Trail, flanked by pits, artifacts, structural scatters and other debris.

j) Matthews Cabin, Dyea. This structure, which probably dates back to the gold rush, measures approximately 22 feet by 17 feet. It was once a homesteader's cabin and has also served as a storehouse, but is now vacant. It is in dilapidated condition. The roof has fallen in, the porch has been removed, and one wall has broken away and is collapsing.

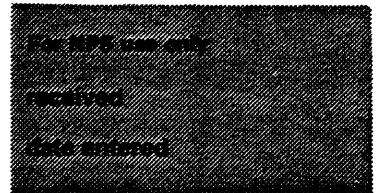
k) Kinney Bridge, Dyea. This is the site of the Taiya River crossing from 1898 to 1903. Stampeders left Dyea at this point as they trudged northward. No trace remains of the bridge itself. On the east side, the bridge abutment is still visible; on the west, its site can only be approximated.

2) Chilkoot Trail and Wagon Road, Dyea to Canyon City. The present recreational trail and the 1898 wagon road follow almost entirely separate alignments in the Taiya River valley. The first mile and one-half of the recreational trail follows the east side of the Taiya River, and was blazed by 1947, probably a decade earlier by local resident Emil Hanousek. The historic wagon road, however, emerges from the Native village area (see resource li), continues up the west side of the river on a still usable road, and crosses the river on the McDermott property (formerly known as the Wilson homestead; see resource lk).

Above this point, both routes are east of the river. The present trail up to Finnegan's Point was a logging road built from 1948 to 1952 as part of Skagway Lumber Company operations. The old wagon road remains west of the present trail as far as the so-called Four Mile Hill. Near the 3.5 mile mark on the trail, a bare, rocky area allows the wagon road to be seen for several hundred yards. North and south of that area, the road has been largely lost to the surrounding forest. The only remaining indicators are occasional insulators and insulator bases

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hanging from trees; these were not necessarily adjacent to the wagon road.

North of Finnegan's Point, the trail remains east of the river, and was constructed in 1961 by Alaska Department of Youth and Adult Authority personnel. The exact route and condition of the wagon road between Finnegan's Point and Canyon City is unknown. Also unknown is the exact location of the 1897 trail, the route which preceded the construction of the wagon road.

3) Finnegan's Point. Located five miles north of Dyea, this was a wayside stop and toll bridge site during the gold rush. It was primarily a tent camp, and the site of most camping was in the flood plain of the Taiya River. Remnants marking the site include two telephone lines, insulators and several deep, rectangular depressions east of the present recreational trail.

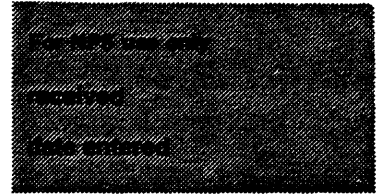
4) Canyon City. Eight miles up the trail, Canyon City was a service town that sprang up in late 1897, thrived for several months and "ghosted" by late 1899. During its heyday, the town was one-half mile long, and at one point was three blocks wide. It contained two tramway power plants, a post office and over twenty other businesses. Today, however, little exists. The north end of the townsite has been obliterated by the Taiya River. Away from the flood plain, a survey located four structural remnants, 18 building foundations, and miscellaneous debris. A later investigation located 135 smaller artifacts.

5) Canyon City Boiler. Near the center of the historic townsite remains is an iron boiler, 16 feet long and about five feet diameter. Nearby are several lengths of large-diameter smokestack; their combined length is about 36 feet. This steam boiler was built to power the proposed Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company tram between here and the top of Chilkoot Pass. Most of the tram was never built.

6) Chilkoot Trail and Wagon Road, Canyon City to Sheep Camp. During the gold rush, wintertime stampeders and wagons climbed the frozen river between Canyon City and Pleasant Camp, but summer travellers zigzagged along a torturous course high above the Taiya River canyon. Few if any remains are seen that related to the winter route. The summer trail, however, is still largely used by Chilkoot hikers. Telegraph wires and at least one utility pole line the route, and a cabin ruin exists one-half mile south of Pleasant Camp. Between Pleasant Camp and Sheep Camp, the present trail follows east of the river, and was constructed

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by corrections personnel in 1961. The historic route, however, climbed the opposite side. This trail can be intermittently followed today, and yields many small gold rush-era artifacts.

7) Pleasant Camp. This small wayside site, halfway between Canyon City and Sheep Camp, was a trail and tramway line crossing. It contained at least one business, as well as a camping area. No known remains exist of the crossing site, but a foundation, a tramway support pole and smaller artifacts mark the surrounding area. Two other foundations are found one-half mile to the south.

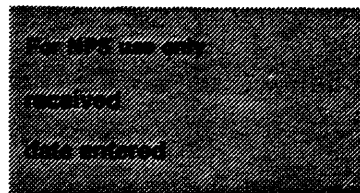
8) Sheep Camp. The largest camp between Dyea and Lake Lindeman, Sheep Camp once stretched along the Chilkoot Trail for one-half mile and was a temporary home for up to 8,000 stamperers. During its height of activity, it contained a post office, a tramway station and over 50 other businesses scattered along several streets. Since 1898, however, Taiya River floods have swept away many buildings, and weathering has destroyed others. A 1979 field survey identified 23 structures, five structural scatters, eight foundations, numerous pits and many large artifacts. A later investigation located 160 new artifacts.

9) Sheep Camp Warehouse. One of the few gold rush structures remaining on the east side of the Taiya River stands adjacent to the Sheep Camp campground. Three walls remain of this log building, which measures 42 feet by 20 feet. Each wall stands between three and four feet high; logs which once laid atop them are scattered about. This structure is shown in several photographs, but is not identified. It was probably a warehouse or stable.

10) Chilkoot Trail, Sheep Camp to Summit. Little is known about the location of the historic trail above Sheep Camp. Most stamperers trod over this section of the trail on snow, and the specific route may have changed over the course of a winter. Neither research nor field work has determined the location of a summer route, except for a short stretch near Sheep Camp. Tramway and utility poles are found throughout the corridor in this area, but none are known to have followed the trail for more than a short distance. The present trail, below timber line, was created by corrections workers in 1961 and 1962. Due to changing snow conditions and the scarcity of suitable tread surface, the trail above timber line is unmaintained.

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11) Choyinsky Grave. The probable grave site of Morris Choyinsky, the only known victim of the flood of September 17, 1897, is located a mile north of Sheep Camp. A wooden, semicircular, illegible grave marker is seen beyond a small rockpile. Both historical and recent accounts suggest this site as the victim's grave.

12) Stone House. This site was an early campground along the Chilkoot, the last camp below tree line. A tent assemblage here was swept away in a September 1897 flood, and few camped here afterwards. The large rock that formerly denoted Stone House has also been dislodged, and is now located at about Mile 14.9 of the trail, one-quarter mile below its former site.

13) Palm Sunday Avalanche Site. Only an interpretive marker indicates the site of the snow slide of April 3, 1898, in which approximately 65 people died. It was the worst disaster of the gold rush, and diverted hundreds away from the Dawson trek. The site today is located at the bottom of a notched ravine; during the summer a large scree slope is exposed.

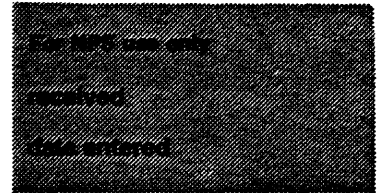
14) Tramway Warehouse and Tower. One-half mile south of the Scales a collapsed 40 foot by 90 foot warehouse is found approximately 200 yards south of the only standing tramway tower along the Chilkoot Trail. The latter is eleven feet tall. These are the two most visible remnants of the Alaska Railroad and Transportation Company's aerial tramway, one of three such operations. Both the warehouse and tower are located on a high bench west of the trail, two miles north of Sheep Camp.

15) Tramway Tension Station. A collapsed latticework of wood planks, 28 feet long and eight and one-half feet wide, is the tangible remains of one of several tension stations that existed along the Chilkoot Railroad and Transport Company's eight-mile tramway. The tension station is just a few feet away from the standing tramway tower (resource 14).

16) The Scales. This short-lived gold rush camp spread across the bowl below the "golden stairs," the path that reached from this point to the top of Chilkoot Pass. At its height of activity, in the spring of 1898, over a dozen businesses were located here, along with massive piles of stampeder's supplies. Few travellers, however, overnighted in this cold, exposed spot. The camp quickly "ghosted," and most of its former structures were packed over the pass. Today, two structural scatters are found,

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along with several tramway cables and over 300 small artifacts.

17) Powerhouse and Boiler at the Scales. At the southern end of the camp lies a 60 foot by 30 foot collapsed wooden building. These flattened boards mark the remains of the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company's warehouse, from which a two-bucket tram operated in 1898. Nearby lies a steam boiler. Once thought to have been part of the DKT operation, it was instead related to one of the motorized hoists situated atop the "golden stairs." The boiler is eight feet long, three and one-half feet wide, and is in excellent condition.

18) Horse Whim Remnants. The remains of this whim are located in a sheltered notch on the east side of the false summit above the Scales. It consisted of a horse-powered horizontal wheel attached to a long rope, and was used to pull sled loads of goods up the "golden stairs." The whim is usually buried in snow, even in summer, and has now been reduced to scattered bits of wood and metal. It is now in poor, deteriorating condition.

19) Motorized Hoist Machinery. Two motorized hoist operations existed between the Scales and the top of Chilkoot Pass during the spring of 1898. Remnants exist from each. On the east side of the trail at the false summit rests the drum and line counter of one hoist, thought to have been part of a steam-powered operation. Within a hundred yards of the summit, and just west of the Centennial Monument, the machinery of a gas-powered hoist rests on skids.

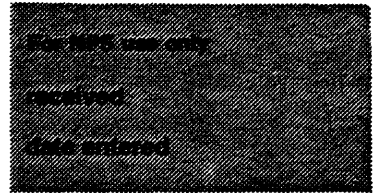
20) Knockdown Boats. Over eighty deteriorated boat kits, composed of canvas wrapped around four-foot lengths of boards, are located on a ledge fifty yards southeast of the Centennial Monument. A gold rush entrepreneur evidently intended to take these kits over the pass and down to the Lake Lindeman; however, the boats were abandoned here. Today, they are distributed widely about the ledge. While a few are still packed in bundles, the contents of others have been opened and scattered.

Non-Contributing Resources

1) Dyea Residences. Several people own structures within the National Register boundaries in the Dyea area. All of these improvements have been built since 1960. Their names and parcel numbers follow:

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Elliott, Willard and Robert Burton (cabin)	USS 1516, Lots 6 and 7
McDermott, John (two cabins)	USS 1516, Lot 13
Kalvick, Alf (house)	USS 1516, Lot 14
Blanchard, Gordon and Lois (cabin)	USS 3341, South 4 acres
Moe, Malcolm (one cabin, four sheds)	USS 3414
Sullivan, Richard E. (one house and the "trappers cabin" one-fourth mile west)	USS 5109, Lot 2
Rapuzzi, Robert (one cabin)	USS 5109, Lot 3 (homesite)

2) Dyea Ranger Station. Three small, gable roofed cabins built in 1980-1982.

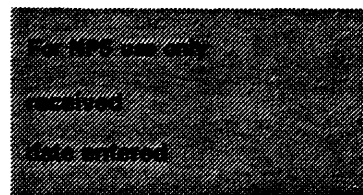
3) Sheep Camp Ranger Station. Two small tents with wooden walls, assembled here by the NPS in 1973.

4) Chilkoot Trail Shelter Cabins. Two log cabins exist, each with adjacent outhouses. All of these structures were built by the State of Alaska, Department of Youth and Adult Authority in 1962-1963.

5) Hosford Sawmill Complex. Two buildings, a ruined sawmill, a large sawdust pile and scattered piles of discarded lumber mark the remains of a sawmill operation that was located three miles north of Dyea between 1948 and 1956. The Hosford residence, approximately 12 feet square, is now in dilapidated condition; its roof has collapsed. The adjacent, planked storage shed, also 12 feet square, remains intact. Its roof and walls are thin, however, and openings between the planks expose the interior to the elements.

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the camp surrounding the post grew apace with the number of prospecting parties that filtered northward.

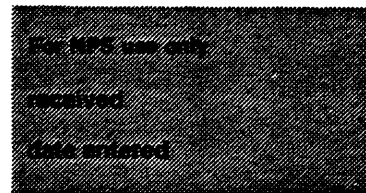
In 1887, Chilkoot Pass gained a rival when the nearby White Pass was explored and publicized. The majority of Ogilvie's Yukon Expedition that year headed over the Chilkoot, but expedition members "Captain" William Moore and Skookum Jim climbed up a relatively unknown valley up the Skagway River. The two found White Pass to be lower and less steep than the Chilkoot. The route to the lakes was slightly longer, however, and the lack of a trail precluded development.⁴ Moore, however, was so captivated by its economic potential that he soon homesteaded the mouth of the valley, and launched an extensive campaign to prepare the route for the gold rush that he felt was sure to come. But actual progress was slow. A party working in his employ hacked a rude path through the forest and up White Pass, but until the summer of 1896 only a single party of prospectors had utilized the route.⁵

Although the number of prospectors filtering over the pass increased to an estimated 3000 per year by the mid-1890's, the operators of Healy and Wilson's store existed in relative isolation. Their idyll was abruptly terminated in mid-July 1897 by news flashes emanating from San Francisco and Seattle. Just as Captain Moore had predicted, large quantities of gold had been discovered in the Yukon River drainage -- specifically, on a tributary of the Klondike River, 450 miles to the north. Immediately a huge rush ensued. Almost all headed for one of several west coast ports before heading north but because so few knew the north country well, many followed ill-advised or treacherous routes. The most common route took passengers to the northern end of the Inside Passage where either the Chilkoot or White Pass routes awaited them. Both were highly touted by the west coast newspapers; both were also vilified, particularly the White Pass trail.⁶

A lively rivalry soon erupted between supporters of the Chilkoot and White Pass routes. Businesses and development interests extolled praise for their route and denigrated the other. To the stamper, the choice was never easy. The Chilkoot, for example, offered a shorter and a better quality trail, though it was by no means easy. But landing at Dyea was such a harrowing, dangerous process that ship captains avoided it in favor of Skagway. Similarly, the steep final climb up Chilkoot Pass forced stampedees to rely on expensive Native packers or on their own efforts. Those hoping to pack over White Pass, however, were cruelly

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deluded; trail conditions were so horrendous that over 3000 pack horses were killed in the fall of 1897, and overcrowding was so extreme that only a small percentage of those attempting the route successfully completed their trip to the lakes. Paradoxically, Skagway boomed as a direct result of the overcrowding. Dyea experienced more modest growth because the Chilkoot remained open and traversable.⁷

With the onset of winter, Dyea began to mushroom in size and importance. Its most critical time of growth took place over the first several months of 1898, and by April the town contained a floating population of 4000 (some said 10,000) fortune seekers. Most stampeders lived in tents or hotels, and stayed for only a few days. But so many passed through -- an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 during the winter of 1897-1898 -- that entrepreneurs flocked to the spot.⁸ One- and two-story business buildings shot up almost overnight.

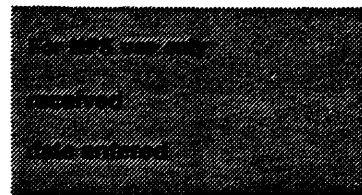
Over 200 businesses were recorded during Dyea's brief flurry of activity. They offered a wide variety of goods and services to the shifting population. The most common businesses were supply houses, hotels, restaurants and saloons; over forty of each were established. Warehouses, drug stores, freighting companies, law offices and real estate agencies were also active. Not surprisingly, the most prominent Dyea commercial interests were those previously active in Juneau, Seattle, Tacoma and other west coast ports.⁹

Dyea was composed of a grid pattern downtown, seven blocks long and five blocks wide. Main Street, which was the primary business thoroughfare, served as the southern end of the Chilkoot Trail. North of downtown, the trail was known as the Old Post Road or River Street, and wound along the western bank of the Taiya River for over a mile before it left the townsite. This section of the trail featured Healy and Wilson's Store, a U.S. Army camp, the Native village and a discontinuous, ever-changing row of gold rush businesses.¹⁰

At the north end of town another small cluster of shops catered to southbound travellers. Travellers leaving Dyea crossed the Taiya River at the north edge of town. A canoe ferry served travellers during the summer and fall of 1897. The Kinney Bridge was completed in December 1897, replaced the ferry. Wintertime travellers evaded bridge tolls by proceeding directly up the frozen Taiya River bed.¹¹

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Dyea was the last major point where the northbound stamperder could purchase supplies at relatively inexpensive rates. However, the entrepreneurial spirit was felt all along the trail. During the height of the gold rush, for instance, travelling lunch counters were seen every few hundred yards along the trail, and shell-game operators reportedly plied their trade at every turn. Longer lasting were trailside encampments that sprang up every few miles. The largest towns were Canyon City, which once boasted 25 businesses and about 1500 residents; Sheep Camp, which had over 50 businesses and a reported 8000 residents; and the Scales, the staging area for packers and tramways companies at the foot of the "Golden Stairs" leading to the summit.¹² Smaller camps were found at Finnegan's Point and Pleasant Camp, both of which were camping areas and small commercial nodes located at stream crossings. On the Canadian side of the pass, small settlements were found at Happy Camp and the head of Long Lake, while large tent cities sprawled along the south shores of Lake Lindeman and Lake Bennett. Each of these settlements were essentially unknown or were non-existent before 1897. Most were established in the summer or fall of that year, grew in importance through the winter and peaked in the spring of 1898.¹³

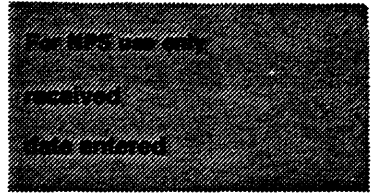
Improvements in transportation and communication were seen along many portions of the route. Chief among them were the tramways. The most sophisticated system, called the Chilkoot Railroad and Transport Company, lifted freight-laden buckets from Canyon City to the top of Chilkoot Pass. Two other aerial tramways also operated; one began midway up Long Hill (between Sheep Camp and the Scales), while the other began at the south end of the Scales. Several crude rope tramways, run by either horses, gasoline or steam, operated between the Scales and the summit. Telephone and telegraph lines followed along the trail corridor from Dyea to Lake Lindeman.¹⁴

The trail itself was improved several times during the stampede. What began as a foot and horse trail along or near the riverbank was improved to a wagon road by December 1897. This road was improved only between Dyea and Canyon City; from there to Sheep Camp, wagons ascended the frozen riverbed. Several sections of corduroy road and several toll bridges were also maintained.¹⁵

The Chilkoot Trail was the main route to the gold fields until the spring of 1898. As the weather warmed, however, its importance plummeted. On April 3, a large snowslide descended on the trail midway between Sheep Camp and the Scales, and over sixty

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stampers and tramway employees lost their lives. News of the tragedy spread throughout the world, causing hundreds to avoid the route.¹⁶

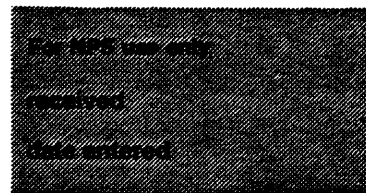
Even more crippling to the Chilkoot was the construction of the White Pass and Yukon Route (WP&YR) railroad. Rumors of railroads over both passes had been newspaper fodder since July 1897. All recognized the need for a railroad, but few had either the technical expertise or adequate funds.¹⁷ When ties, rails and capital appeared in Skagway in May 1898, interest ebbed thereafter from the Chilkoot corridor. Considering the rugged terrain and formidable supply problems, the railroad was built with remarkable dispatch. Four miles of track were opened less than two months after construction began, and rails were completed to the top of White Pass by February 1899. Tracks were extended to Bennett in July, and the 110-mile line was finished to Whitehorse a year later.¹⁸

The presence of the railroad doomed Dyea and the various Chilkoot trail communities. A few hung on in Dyea, and as late as March 1900 its population topped 250. But the trailside camps soon emptied out. Canyon City offered only a few open stores during the winter of 1898-99 (its post office had closed the previous fall), and by April 1899 the population in Sheep Camp had dwindled to eighteen.¹⁹ The tramway companies tried to stay competitive, but they were only partially successful. When the ice broke on the lakes that year, what lifeblood remained on the Chilkoot floated away. Soon afterward the tramways were bought out by the WP&YR, shut down and dismantled.²⁰

For the next sixty years, land within this nomination was only slightly used. Some Dyea buildings were moved, a few were burned, and many were dismantled to make way for turnips, potatoes and other garden truck destined for Skagway and other local markets.²¹ As guests of hotel keeper Harriet Pullen, a few tourists visited Dyea over the years.²² The Chilkoot Trail was ignored almost entirely. Accounts suggest that an average of only one party of hikers braved the route each year. The only intensive use in the corridor between 1900 and 1960 was the Skagway Lumber Company clear cutting of the spruce forests south of Canyon City between 1948 and 1956. After 1961, the trail has witnessed increasing use by recreationists.²³

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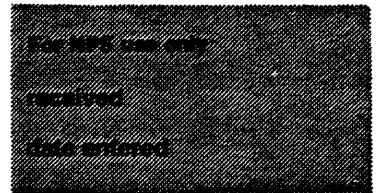
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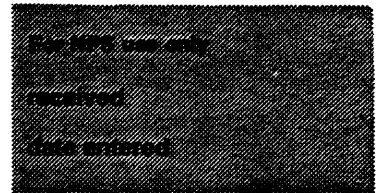
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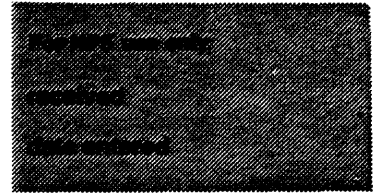
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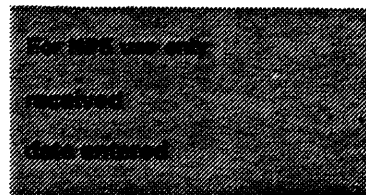
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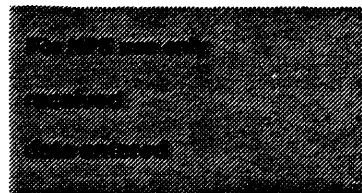
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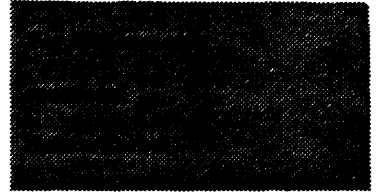
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Boundary Description

The nominated area is an irregularly shaped polygon approximately 17 miles long and between one-quarter and one mile wide. It is completely contained within the Taiya River valley drainage. The enclosed area contains all or part of the following sections of land: Secs. 17, 20, 29, 30 and 31, T25S, R60E; Sec. 6, T26S, R60E; Secs. 1, 11, 12, 14, 23, 26, 34 and 35, T26S, R59E; Secs. 2, 3, 10, 11, 14, 15, 22, 27 and 34, T27S, R59E; Secs. 3 and 10, T28S, R59E, all CRM.