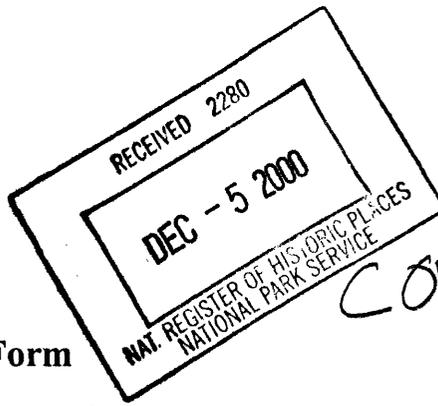


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of the Elk City Wagon Road

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Transportation along the Elk City Transportation Corridor, Harpster to Elk City, 1894-1932

C. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale M. Gray
organization Frontier Historical Consultants date September 1, 1999
street & number HC 86, Box 211 telephone (208) 834-3061
city or town Grandview state Idaho zip code 83719-0654

D. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. [] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth C. ... 27 Nov 2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Galson H. Beall 1/16/01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Handwritten initials

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 1

Statement of Historic Context

From 1895 to 1932, the Elk City Wagon Road provided a vital route for wheeled traffic into the rugged Clearwater Mountains in north central Idaho. The Wagon Road linked the gold fields of the upper Clearwater country with established transportation routes to the west. Built roughly along the route of the Southern Nez Perce Trail, the wagon road connected Harpster in the west to Elk City to the east. The 53-mile-long-road followed ridgelines over two summits avoiding the valley bottoms which the South Fork of the Clearwater River made inaccessible. The construction of the wagon road allowed the miners in the established placer gold mining camps of the upper Clearwater River valley to tap the riches of the more technologically demanding hard rock lodes. The Road continued service until it was replaced by the water-grade Highway 14 in 1932.

The initial Elk City gold strike occurred in 1861 when a group of prospectors from Oro Fino crossed into the Nez Perce Reservation which was established by treaty in 1855. After meeting with Nez Perce Chief Cool-Cool-Snee-Nee, 22 men continued east along the Southern Nez Perce Trail to where it descends into the valley of the South Fork of the Clearwater River. There, on May 14, 1861, they found placer gold while panning just west of present-day Elk City. When a group of men returned to Oro Fino in June to get supplies, a rush of new prospectors from Oro Fino and Pierce followed the men back to the placers near the confluence of the South Fork and Red Rivers. Prospectors en route to Elk City discovered gold along Newsome Creek as well. On June 14, the predominately pro-North miners organized a mining district known originally as the Union District, but which later became known as the Central District. With 1,000-2,000 men in the vicinity, the town of Elk City was founded in September of 1861. A month later, the town was nearly deserted as the men rushed to the new Florence gold strike. While Elk City placers were not as rich as those at Florence, they were more dependable, so many miners returned to Elk City after the initial excitement at Florence died down. To work the hillside placers, a system of ditches was constructed that fed water to hydraulic giants that washed the gold-bearing gravel into sluices where the gold could be recovered. Between 1861 and 1867 an estimated \$3.4 million in gold was recovered at the Central District (McKay 1998:88-89).

During the initial gold strike at Elk City, merchants moved large pack strings of supplies along a segment of the Southern Nez Perce Trail which became known as the Elk City Pack Trail. As

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2

the fortunes of the mining camp waned, miners left the area, and the workings at Elk City and Newsome were turned over to the Chinese. Around 1884, Euro-American miners began returning to the area, pushing out the Chinese miners. Because of racially-biased legislation and acts of violence, all but a few of the Chinese had left the region by 1892. With the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893, miners formerly employed in silver districts returned to the gold mines of the South Fork of the Clearwater to work hard rock mines and dredge the creeks. This sparked an interest in a wagon road that would allow supplies and heavy mill equipment to be carried to Elk City. The new wagon road, roughly following the route of the pack trail, was begun in 1894 and completed in 1895. A series of way stations, watering spots, and landmarks could soon be found along the wagon road. The road continued to be used until a new water-grade route was constructed between 1920 and 1932.

Elk City Pack Trail (1861-1888)

The Elk City Pack Trail was first used by miners en route to the Elk City placer mines in the upper Clearwater country in 1861. They encountered the Nez Perce Trail near Walls Creek at the foot of the Newsome Creek Mountains and followed it to the southeast. The route did not follow along the nearly inaccessible river bottoms but rather took advantage of the mountain ridges. It passed over two summits and descended into the valley of the South Fork of the Clearwater River near the gold strike. The route was well suited for the Indians that traveled its length in the summer to gain access to the buffalo hunting grounds of Montana, but was less well suited to miners trying to pack in supplies during the heavy snows of winter (Maxwell 1986; Elsensohn 1951).

In 1861, a rich gold strike at Elk City brought miners flooding into the Upper Clearwater country. Elk City quickly became known for its extensive ditch networks as the miners worked the shallow alluvial deposits. No heavy equipment could be carted to the camp because of the narrow trail to the camp; therefore, industrial development of the placers was limited to the machinery that could be produced locally or packed in on mule trains. In addition, there were no services along the trail, so merchants who supplied the miners were left to their own devices as they packed goods into their Elk City stores.

With the strikes in Florence, Idaho, and across the mountains in Montana at Grasshopper Gulch and then Alder Gulch, the prospectors that had flooded into Elk City flowed out again. As they sold out, men such as Jim Witt, who managed the ditch projects in Elk City, consolidated

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3

property. With no men or machines to work the placers, the isolated Elk City mining district was well suited for Chinese miners who moved in even as the Euro-American miners moved out (Elsensohn 1971).

Chinese on the South Fork of the Clearwater

Chinese were excluded from the Idaho mining camps in the early 1860s. Miners who had come from California, remembering how Chinese had taken over the placer grounds of California in previous years, excluded Chinese from the new Idaho camps. Although the first Chinese miners did not appear until 1865, in a preemptive move in 1861, the miners at Pierce and Florence prohibited Chinese from entering their camp, and the miners at Warren excluded Chinese in 1862. However, when the Montana strikes of Grasshopper Creek and Alder Gulch drew away nearly all available manpower, Elk City mine owners pressured miners' courts to allow Chinese in to work the placers (Wikoff 1972).

By the spring of 1867, only 20 non-Chinese miners remained at the mining camp at Newsome (near Elk City), but numerous Chinese were busy working the streams. Chinese were also reported in Elk City in July of 1867. In 1870 the census listed over 600 Chinese in Elk City. By 1872 there were 240 Chinese miners at Newsome and 1,300 Chinese in the Elk City District. The amount of gold recovered by the Chinese is not known, but in 1872 they were reported as earning a "fair wage" at Newsome. James Witt went into partnership with Chinese entrepreneur Lee Mann, owning productive placer ground in Deadwood Gulch near Elk City, a fact indicative of the growing influence of the Chinese miners in the region (Wikoff 1972).

Beginning in 1884, there was a gradual renewal of interest in the Elk City mines by non-Chinese mine developers, but the camp remained predominantly Chinese for several more years. The *Free Press* in 1888 reported only 18 "whites" and 100 Chinese wintering over in Elk City (McKay 1998:89).

Although the Chinese had been working the area steadily for many years, the increased number of miners and diminishing return on the placer grounds created an unfavorable environment. While the majority of the Chinese lived quiet and productive lives, the latent racism of portions of the American society did not leave them in peace. The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 brought a halt to the immigration of Chinese to the West Coast. Anti-Chinese leagues

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 4

were organized throughout Idaho territory for the purpose of expelling the Chinese. Self-proclaimed vigilantes committed several mass murders in Idaho against Chinese. By the fall of 1886, many Chinese began leaving the mining camps to return to China. Euro-Americans began "jumping" Chinese mining claims. In Elk City, Chinese miners sued Euro-American claim jumpers for \$10,000 in damages. Other Chinese resorted to hiring "Chinese Herders" -- Euro-Americans who were paid to rejump claims and stand armed guard over the Chinese as they worked. In 1887, an Act of Congress stripped aliens of the right to own property and claim jumping of Chinese mining property became the order of the day as many Chinese in the Elk City area were driven from their claims. Non-Chinese miners who leased claims to Chinese also had their claims jumped. In 1890 the passage of the Geary Act by Congress required the registering of all Chinese. Many Chinese chose to leave the country rather than register. There followed a mass exodus from the Idaho gold fields. The merchants such as Sing Lee and Lee Mann who remained were left holding their accounts (Wikoff 1972)

By 1890, the Chinese population of Elk City had dropped to only 35. Despite the growing anti-Chinese sentiment, those few that remained appeared to be doing well. In 1891, Chinese were reported to be earning from "three to five dollars a day" in the Elk City District. Most of these were no longer directly employed in mining, but instead, held jobs ranging from merchants to cooks. The last of the Chinese miners, Sing Lee, worked a small crew of men on the gravel bars at Newsome as late as 1892 (Elsensohn 1971; Wikoff 1972).

Elk City Pack Trail (1888-1895)

Because of the renewed interest in Elk City by Euro-American miners in the mid-1880s, a post office was established at the mining camp in 1888. However, the postal service failed to provide a carrier. As a result, the carrier was engaged with money from private subscriptions. In November of 1888, the first government contract was let to carry the mail on a weekly basis from Clearwater to Elk City, and the trail became an official mail route.

The trip into Elk City required overnight stops (*Free Press* 10/5/1888; 12/14/1888; Elsensohn 1951), so gradually services were established along the trail. Stations had been established at the Wall ranch two miles south of Clearwater and at Newsome, and a hotel operated in Elk City. In the winter, the often very deep snow made travel much slower, and so an additional stop had to be constructed:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5

There was a small cabin on the Elk City Trail known as the Ten Mile Cabin, where we were in the habit of stopping overnight in going from Grangeville to Elk City. In size the cabin was about eight by ten feet. In it was a fireplace, two pole bunks with pine boughs for mattresses. The utensils consisted of a water pail, frying pan, coffee pot, washing pan, a few tin plates, a few iron knives and forks, as well as some iron spoons. The cabin was where the mail carrier would stop overnight in the winter time, when he had to go on snowshoes and carry the mail on his back. The door was never locked, and many weary travelers found it a welcome refuge. . . It derived its name by being about ten miles up the mountain from the Wahl (sic) Ranch (Bailey 1947:94-95 citing a 1932 letter received from N. B. Pettibone).

In 1890 the Newsome station was abandoned, and travelers along the trail stayed instead at the cabin of Sing Lee about two miles beyond Newsome.

In the spring of 1893, in anticipation of the construction of a wagon road between Grangeville and Elk City, Ezra Baird and Felix Warren introduced a stage and saddle train service. A stage took passengers as far as the Silverwood ranch where they switched to saddle train for the remainder of the trip. Eight horses were stationed at Silverwood's for the purpose (*Free Press* 5/12/1893).

Elk City Wagon Road (1894 - 1932)

With the shutdown of the silver mines by the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893, the gold of Elk City began to attract renewed interest. As the easily worked placer deposits were exhausted, the Elk City miners looked to hard rock mining to make their fortunes. However, this type of mining was much more technically demanding, and efforts were hampered by the limited weight and size of equipment that could be packed in to the mines on the backs of horses and mules. In the late 1880s, plans were made to run a railroad branch line up the South Fork of the Clearwater River to tap the wealth of the upper Clearwater mining camps, but fiscal and engineering obstacles caused the plans to fold at an early stage. Since the rails were not coming, the newspaper began to agitate for a wagon road to Elk City. James SurrIDGE, the county representative from Harpster, secured a \$20,000 appropriation from the Legislature to build a wagon road that roughly followed the Elk City Trail. A contract was awarded to two firms out of Spokane on January 12, 1894: Cameron and Lynch, and Burns and Jordan. The first section to be completed extended from Riebold's sawmill (formerly Walls Ranch), to within one mile west of Newsome before the money ran out. The road roughly followed the Elk City Trail, but

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 6

deviated to create grades acceptable to wagon traffic (Bailey 1947:93; Morrow 1996).

The next year donations from merchants and citizens of Grangeville, men in the Clearwater country, and the miners at Elk City, allowed road construction to continue. Pat Leich wrote to the catalog houses of Sears and Montgomery Ward soliciting \$25 donations and N. B. Pettibone donated 30 days labor to complete the road. "The maximum grade did not exceed ten percent and the ascent of Baldy was reported as being so gentle that travelers could trot their teams to the summit without realizing they were climbing a big mountain" (*Free Press* 8/29/1895: p. 1, c. 4). The construction continued with the completion of the last stretch from a mile west of Newsome to Elk City on July 1, 1895. A cart with three men drove into Elk City, sparking a celebration. This first traverse of the road took five and a half days (Bailey 1947:93; Morrow 1996; *Free Press* 7/5/1895, p. 4, c. 3; Chedsey and Frei 1990).

By early August stage traffic began to use the road. The stage, usually a double-seated buckboard with a canvas cover, would leave Grangeville every Tuesday and Friday at 5:00 a.m. and arrive in Elk City at 4:00 p.m. the next day. The stage and travelers would over-night at the new stage stop constructed on the summit of Mount Baldy (Mountain House). Initially, the fare for a round trip ticket cost six dollars with a one way fare priced at four dollars. Freight was charged at one and a half cents per pound (*Free Press* 8/9/1895: p. 1, c. 3).

The Buffalo Hump gold rush of 1898 created a constant stream of freight wagons on the road. In April of 1898, Vollmer and Scott, in Mt. Idaho, shipped 3000 pounds of freight to Elk City on a single day. The feat was even more impressive considering the freight was moved by sleigh from Switchback to Elk City. When the road thawed, stopping places were crowded with resting teams, and wagons often met in narrow portions of the road (*Free Press* 4/8/1898; Bailey 1947). When this occurred, one wagon was unloaded and lifted to the side of the road so the other could pass (Bailey 1947: 96). Other obstacles remained as well: when the snow was heavy, horses had to be outfitted with snowshoes in order to avoid sinking themselves, and spring runoff could cause significant damage and washouts to the road.
(*Free Press* 10/14/1898; 2/3/1899; 3/17/1899; 6/16/1899; 7/28/1899).

The first automobile trip over the Elk City Wagon Road was recorded by the *Free Press* in 1911.

During the summer of 1911, John Jack and R. Cote undertook an automobile trip into the upper

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 7

South Fork country. The trip is a hard one and no doubt the party will have some thrilling experiences before the return to Grangeville. This is the first car to go into the Elk country, the roads to the camp being in such a condition that people have not cared to hazard such a journey (*Free Press* 8/24/1911: p. 1. c. 5 as cited in IHS 1985).

Stage service was the only regular transportation available to Elk City until May, 1915, when O. A. "Ole" Johnson and John Phillips obtained the Elk City mail contract for a reported flat fee of \$14,000. In an effort to improve services while reducing costs, the company began to use automobiles along the route. Johnson was first reported to have driven an automobile from Elk City to Stites (north of Grangeville) through the snow in late October of 1917. The following year, Johnson and Phillips began using a truck over a portion of the route making two trips a day from Newsome to Elk City. By eliminating horses from that portion of the route, they reportedly were able to reduce their operating costs by eliminating the cost of horse feed and care. Their stage line also provided transportation services to Red River for firefighters (*Free Press* 5/27/1915; 11/1/17; 7/25/18). Apparently, the next summer, the stage resumed some use of horses, as the *Free Press* reported in summer, 1919, that a stage was upset about five and a half miles west of Elk City when the tongue of the four horse stage broke (*Free Press* 7/3/1919).

The automobile, however, continued to improve and to prove itself along the route. In late July of 1919, Walter McAdams and seven passengers drove the distance between Grangeville and Elk City in four hours and twenty minutes. In early July of 1920, Ole Johnson announced that trucks would be used on the entire route -- reducing the travel time to a day and a half. Horses were retained for a time, however, because of mud and snow between Switchback and Newsome. A week later, the *Free Press* reported one day service to Elk City had become a reality on July 5, when an automobile stage drove the entire route. Horses continued to be used during periods of poor road conditions, but automobiles came to dominate the line. Finally, in the fall of 1927, the use of horses was discontinued completely. During the winter "cats" were used to pull the sleighs over the mountain passes (*Free Press* 7/1/1920; 7/8/1920; 7/20/1920; Fales 1982; IHS 1985).

The road was described by the state mining inspector's report in 1931 as:

... [It led] from Stites [or Grangeville] to Elk City, a distance of 53 miles, crossed two high divides with such a great change in climatic conditions that it was never open to wheeled

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 8

vehicles for more than four months of the year. Starting at Stites with an elevation of 1,200 feet, the road ascended in the first 25 miles to an elevation of 6,500 at the top of Mount Baldy, then descended a distance of 8 miles to 3,800 feet at Newsome; from there it ascended to an elevation of 5,700 feet at the top of Elk Summit, a distance of 9 miles; and then descended 9 miles to an elevation of 3,950 feet at Elk City. . . Many of the level stretches were through swamps over which corduroys were necessary (Idaho Inspector of Mines 1935: 147).

Meanwhile, the difficulties posed by the two summits along the ECWR - especially in winter - prompted travelers to pressure the County Commissioners to construct a water-grade route along the South Fork of the Clearwater River. The construction of this road began in 1915 and proceeded through fits and starts for many years, hampered by lack of funds and engineering difficulties. By the 1920s, travelers were able to by-pass some of the western portions of the Elk City Wagon Road by using the new water-grade route, and each new section of highway shortened the distance that the Wagon Road was used. By 1932, Highway 14 was completed to Elk City, and few thereafter opted to travel on the Elk City Wagon Road.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 1

F.
ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

I.
Name of Property Type: Wagon Road Segments

II.
Description:

Wagon Road Segments

The route utilized by the Elk City Wagon Road was originally used by the Nez Perce and other tribes to gain access to buffalo hunting grounds in Montana. They developed a route along the ridges to the north of the South Fork of the Clearwater that provided a practical summer route that was largely free of cliffs and would not get choked with excessive deadfall. In 1861, the trail provided ready access to the gold strike at Elk City for the miners and the merchants that supported them. Miners were prohibited from entering the Nez Perce Reservation, so they skirted its southern edge and crossed the South Fork of the Clearwater at what is today the town of Harpster. They then ascended Wall Creek to connect with the Southern Nez Perce Trail which brought them not only to Elk City, but a few years later provided a route beyond to the Montana gold strikes. The Elk City Wagon Road has since survived as a continuous link between Harpster / Clearwater / Grangeville to the west and Elk City to the east.

The width of the road from top of road cut to bottom of road fill varies due to terrain and subsequent improvements to the road. The road was constructed in 1894-95 and remained in service as the main road to Elk City until 1932. Erosion, both deposition on the trail and removal of the out lip meant the road required continual maintenance. Trees falling across the road provided an occasional impediment. With its ridgetop location and two summits, the route was also subject to snow much of the year -- requiring sleighs in the winter and snow removal in the late spring to inaugurate wheeled traffic. Without this maintenance, the Road quickly deteriorated and became impassable.

Due to a highly varied post-use history, the physical integrity of the Elk City Wagon Road ranges from excellent to greatly diminished. The values of location, association, materials,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F Page 2

feeling and workmanship remain high for most of the surviving road segments. Some segments have been subject to improvements that have altered the design with anti-erosion devices or by rebuilding the former wagon road. Other segments have lowered values of materials with the surfacing of the road with gravel. Several sections have had their values of feeling and association lowered by the clear cutting of trees along the road's view shed. The loss of all but one of the standing structures at the several stage stops has lowered the values of association for the entire road. However, there remain several segments that are considered pristine and convey in both appearance and in function the character of the Elk City Wagon Road during its period of significance.

The Elk City Wagon Road remains as a linear string of road segments stretching from Harpster to Elk City. The segments' conditions vary, but can each generally be described as one of the following: abandoned with vegetative regrowth on the road; limited access with little change in appearance from the period of significance; unimproved road segments open to public use; original road right-of-way with some surface improvement; road segments reconstructed to handle modern logging traffic; and road fragments along realigned modern roads. In addition, at least five corduroy road sections are known to exist along the route.

In the vicinity of timber sales, the road has been slightly realigned to handle the weight and turning radius of modern logging trucks. As a result, several segments of the original road were abandoned. These segments are unaltered, but have experienced decades of vegetative growth, erosion and deadfall. These segments can be found in the vicinity of Wall Creek, Four Ways Went Junction to Switchback Station, Ten Mile Flats, and Elk Summit.

Several segments which did not readily adapt to local usage or were by-passed by alternate routes can still be traveled. Examples of these unimproved road segments include: the Vicory / Smith grade; the road between Newsome and Mountain Hous; and a segment to the east of the Buffalo Creek crossing. The roads are passable two-tracks and have had light maintenance, but are little changed from historic conditions.

Segments of the road that have been incorporated into the Forest Service road network have had a variety of maintenance work and experienced several levels of upgrade. Segments from Switchback Station to 10 Mile Saddle have been bladed and a light application of surface material made. Other sections such as those from 10 Mile Saddle to China Point and from Sweeney Hill to Mud Springs have had more extensive grading and surfacing.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F **Page** 3

In other areas, such as along the banks of Newsome Creek, the road has been obliterated by dredges and a new modern gravel road built to replace it.

At the ends of the road, modern usage is heavier and the historic route has continued to be used as part of the local commuter system. In these areas, modern roads follow the original route and overlay it. Narrow ribbon fragments of the original wagon road can be seen along the margins where the route has been adjusted slightly. The west end of the road near Harpster now contains a modern paved road. Occasional trail fragments are visible as terraces on road cuts. Near Elk City the original road bed can be seen intermittently along the side of the road where the route has been adjusted to meet local conditions.

Marshy areas particularly in the vicinity of Mountain House and Vicory Cabin required construction of segments of corduroy road. While this provided traction for the horses and kept the wagons out of the marshes, it was by no means a smooth ride. The narrow wagon wheels would cut through the surface material down to the poles below. In freight wagons with no springs, this resulted in a very bumpy ride.

The specifications for the log corduroy were published in an issue of the 1893 *Idaho County Free Press*.

WAGON ROAD CORDUROY SPECIFICATION

12' long by 6" diameter of sound timber. Bedded on three sills of not less than 12' long and 6" diameter of sound timber, covered with 6" of earth or gravel (Morrow 1999 citing 1893 *Free Press*).

The timber of choice was lodgepole pine which was available in no short supply locally.

**III.
Significance**

This property type is significant under National Register Criterion A, in the area of transportation. The Elk City Wagon Road provided an established route for miners, merchants

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F Page 4

and other travelers to make their way from the Snake River travel corridors into a remote and rugged wilderness that was inaccessible utilizing traditional water-level routes. When the Elk City gold strike occurred in 1861, miners found a ready-made trail to Elk City along a portion of the Nez Perce Trail. Merchants following with pack strings of goods to supply the miners used the Elk City Pack Trail, camping along its route. However, before the mines could agitate for an improved trail, the Elk City boom ended. White miners left the placer grounds to the Chinese who engaged in a less technologically intensive method of mining that could be supported by supplies packed in.

Following the crash of silver markets in 1893, miners again flooded into the country. This renewed mining boom could only be supported by state of the art milling equipment to reduce hard rock ores, but its transportation to Elk City proved problematic. Amazing feats of packing provided the mines along the South Fork of the Clearwater with equipment up to and including a small stamp mill. But the pack trail could not support the industrial scale of equipment needed to work the ore economically, so a wagon road was cut along the trail's path in 1894-95 to provide wheeled access to Elk City. Without the Elk City Wagon Road, the Elk City area would not have experienced the boom of the 1890s and 1900s.

**IV
Registration Requirements**

The following procedures were incorporated into this study to establish criteria for the evaluation of the associated property type. Any further summary and evaluation of the property type should utilize this same methodology. The requirements were established using both the criteria outlined in the National Register guidelines for assessing integrity, and criteria established specifically to deal with the property type. Because the property types are so closely related to the historic context, the narrative should be consulted to determine association between the two. Nominated properties must be directly associated with historic transportation and mining activities along the Elk City Transportation Corridor during the period between the initial gold strike in Elk City in 1861 and the completion of the Clearwater River grade road in 1932.

For the purposes of this nomination, wagon road segments are defined as the continuous

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 5

constructed road surface that historically connected Harpster/Clearwater on the west with Elk City on the east. To be an eligible property type, the wagon road segment must retain high values of location, feeling, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. In addition, eligible wagon road segments must comply with the following attributes:

- * The trail or Wagon Road must be part of the documented path of the Elk City Wagon Road which was in use from 1894 to 1932.
- * Activities such as blading and applying surface veneer of gravel are considered normal maintenance of the Elk City Wagon Road. These activities do not significantly alter the integrity of the road segments. Placement of water bars, culverts and other erosion control devices are also considered normal maintenance.
- * Abandoned road segments that contain the full-width of the Wagon Road are considered eligible.
- * Linear, partial lane road fragments produced by adjustments to the road right of way since 1932 are not considered eligible for nomination due to diminished integrity.
- * Road segments that have been realigned or reconstructed since 1932 are not eligible for nomination. Rebuilding of the base of the road also significantly lowers the integrity of the road segment; thus, such road segments are ineligible for nomination.

In addition, it should be noted that there is significant Criterion D potential along the Elk City Wagon Road. Although the structures that once serviced travelers on the wagon road are no longer extant, their locations are known, and in some places apparent. These sites would potentially be eligible under Criterion D and archeological survey to ascertain their status is recommended.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number G Page 1

G. Geographical Data

The Elk City Transportation Corridor is located in Idaho County, Idaho in the mountainous north central portion of the state. The wagon road begins at Stites with a branch line to Clearwater. The road extends 53 miles to the southeast over two mountain passes to the mining community of Elk City. The route passes through private and public lands. The public lands are within the Clearwater and the Elk City Ranger Districts of the Nez Perce National Forest.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number H **Page** 1

Summary and Identification and Evaluation Methods

In 1998, the members of the Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission, on behalf of the Idaho County Commissioners, requested permission and cooperation from the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to review the integrity of the Elk City Wagon Road (ECWR) in concert with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office staff. The result was a Certified Local Government grant from the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office administered by the Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission. The grant provided for a Multiple Property Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for the Elk City Wagon Road as well as a NRHP site nomination form for one eligible segment. A records search was undertaken with the help of local historians, Don and Esther Morrow, who have extensively researched the ECWR. The project was directed by Dale M. Gray, a historical archaeologist based out of Boise, Idaho.

The Elk City Wagon Road provided a vital link between the mining community of Elk City and rail links accessed through Harpster and Clearwater, Idaho. In 1861, miners utilized the Elk City Pack Trail to bring supplies into the mining camps of the South Fork of the Clearwater River. The wagon road constructed in 1894/95 allowed wheeled vehicles carrying men, supplies and heavy mining and milling equipment to flow to Elk City and ore and concentrates to be shipped out to mills and smelters. The wagon road continued service until it was replaced by a water level route in 1932.

The record search was conducted in state and federal archives, libraries, state CRM files and the National Register listings. Secondary or published sources were used pertaining to the development, use, and abandonment of the pack trail and wagon road; the occupation of the country by the Chinese; and the working of local mines along the wagon road. Primary sources such as newspapers were also utilized to ascertain dates, details of stage and freight travel and names of individuals involved. A search through existing National Register files indicated that no properties associated with the Elk City Wagon Road are yet listed in the Register.

After consultation with Don Morrow, three historic contexts were identified. These include portions of the Elk City Historic Pack Trail /Wagon Road, Chinese Occupation, and historic mining. Through consultation with the Idaho State Preservation Office it was decided to concentrate exclusively on the Elk City Wagon Road. Seventeen segments of road were identified with varying degrees of integrity resulting from modern road reconstruction work associated with timber harvesting projects. Within these segments are several road features including road bed, switchbacks and corduroy road segments.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number H **Page** 2

Because of time and budget constraints, a National Register of Historic Places Nomination form was prepared for only one segment of the Elk City Wagon Road, the Vicory Gulch / Smith Grade Segment. Other road segments and historic sites were noted and a list prepared for future inclusion in this Multiple Property listing.

Road segments were measured by use of a vehicle odometer in terms of their distance from Harpster. Start and finish points were measured and the segments plotted on a 7.5 minute USGS topographic map. Travelers service points and watering spots were also measured in terms of their distance from Harpster.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 1

Anonymous

1983 "Elk City Wagon Road Construction" excerpts from *Idaho County Free Press*.

Bailey, Robert G.

1947 *River of No Return (The Great Salmon River)*, R. G. Bailey Publishing Company, Lewiston, Idaho.

Carboneau, Simone

1978 "Prehistoric Nez Perce Trail - 10-IH-883," Cultural Site Record.

Chedsey, Zona

1986 "Early Hotels Provided Comfort, Lodging, and Local History," *Idaho County Free Press*, June 18, 1986, Section II, p. 3.

Chedsey, Zona and Carolyn Frei, Editors

1990 *Idaho County Voices: A People's History From the Pioneers to the Present*, Idaho County Centennial Committee.

Eisensohn, Sister M. Alfreda

1947 *Pioneer Days in Idaho County*, Vol. I, Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho.

1951 *Pioneer Days in Idaho County*, Vol. II, Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho.

1971 *Idaho Chinese Lore*, Idaho Corporation of Benedictine Sisters, Cottonwood, Idaho.

Fales, D.

1982 "Memories of Switchback Station Recalled," *Idaho County Free Press*, August 18, 1982, Section III, p. 4.

Friends of the Elk City Wagon Road

1995 "The Elk City Wagon Road: Historic Adventure Guide, Centennial Edition July 15, 1895/July 15, 1995," Self published.

Gallagher, Wanda Jo

1975 "Buffalo Creek Campground," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-669.

1976a "Sweeney Hill Nez Perce Camp," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-657.

1976b "Elk City Cemetery," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-658.

1976c "Elk City Wagon Road," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-674.

1976d "Nez Perce Trail," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-675.

1976e "Mountain House," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-681.

1976f "Sing Lee's Cabin," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-682.

1976g "Jack Montgomery Cabin," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-1651.

1976h "Switchback Station," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-679.

1985b "Elk Summit Springs," Idaho Archaeological Site Survey 10-IH-1652.

Haeder, D.

1987 "Residents Relive History of Elk City Wagon Road," *Idaho County Free Press*, August 12, 1987, Section A, p. 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 2

Huntley, J. G.

1988a "Ten Mile Cabin," Cultural Site Record 10-IH-1910.

1988b "Newsome Cemetery," Cultural Site Record 10-IH-1915.

1988c "Interim Cultural Resource Evaluation of the Southern Nez Perce Trail," USDA Forest Service Report.

1989 "Elk City Wagon Road Present Condition & Future Needs," Unpublished Forest Service Report. Grangeville, Idaho.

1991a "Cultural Resource Inventory Report", unpublished USFS report. Grangeville, Idaho.

1991b "Southern Nez Perce Trail", Cultural Site Record.

Idaho County Free Press (Cited as *Free Press*).

Idaho Historical Society

1985 "Grangeville-Elk City Stage Lines," Reference Series Number 789.

Idaho Inspector of Mines

1935 *Thirty-Third Annual Report*, Boise, Idaho.

McKay, Kathryn L.

1999 "Gold for the Taking: Historical Overview of the Florence Mining District, Idaho, County, Idaho," prepared for the Nez Perce National Forest, Grangeville, Idaho by Tracks of the Past, Columbia Falls, Montana.

McLean, Cliff

1995 "Nolen Way Station," unpublished manuscript, Cliff McLean, Grangeville, Idaho.

Maxwell, Gertrude

1986 *My Yesterdays in Elk City*, *Idaho County Free Press*, Grangeville, Idaho.

Morrow, Don

1999 Personal communications with Dale M. Gray and undated research notes.

1996 "Early Trails and Roads in Idaho County," unpublished manuscript. Grangeville, Idaho.

Morrow, Don and Weholt, Carl A.

1987 "An Elk City Freight and Stage Odyssey," unpublished manuscript. Grangeville, Idaho.

Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF)

1990 "The Elk City Wagon Road: A 'Trip Through Time,' on a Nez Perce National Forest Adventure Road," Nez Perce National Forest.

Parker, Reverend Samuel

1967 *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains Under the Direction of the A. B. C. F. M. Performed in the Years 1835, '36, and '37*, Ross & Haines, Minneapolis.

Peterson, Ernst, and H. E. Anderson

1966 "Retracing the Southern Nez Perce Trail with Rev Samuel Parker," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, 16 (4): 12-27.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 1 **Page** 3

Rice, David G.

1975 "Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Elk City Wagon Road, Nez Perce National Forest, Idaho," US Forest Service. Grangeville, Idaho.

Schacher, Cindy L.

1995 "Historic Corral Hill Way Station (along the Elk City Wagon Road), Cultural Site Record 10-IH-680.

Standard, Grangeville, ID. 1904 "Harpster: Important Clearwater Town" Industrial Edition. p. 71.

Stites Enterprise

c. 1908 Stites: The Nearest Railroad Point to Newsome City, Orogrande, Buffalo Hump and Dixie Mining Districts."

Ward, Rosaleen

1992 "Elk City Wagon Road: Management Plan," Clearwater Ranger District / Elk City Ranger District.

Wikoff, Melvin D.

1972 "Chinese in the Idaho County Gold Fields: 1864 - 1933," Master's Thesis, Texas A&I University.