

Excerpt for  
CROW PASS TRAIL  
ANC-270 (SEW-144)

**SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE IDITAROD TRAIL  
AND CONNECTING TRAILS IN THE CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST**

**DRAFT TECHNICAL REPORT**

**VOLUME 2: NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION FORMS**

Prepared for  
**USDA Forest Service  
Chugach National Forest  
Anchorage, Alaska**

Prepared by  
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**Performed under Contract No. 53-0109-9-00273**

**March, 1991**

PHASE I EVALUATION FORM

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March, 1991

1. Name of Property: Crow Pass Trail  
AHRS Site #: ANC-270, SEW-143
2. Location: Sections 4, 9, 16, 21, 27, 28, 34, T.11N-R.2E; Sections 3, 4, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, T.10N-R.2E. Anchorage A-6 and Seward D-6  
Quadrangles.
3. Classification:  
Ownership: Public-federal  
Category of Property: Structure  
Number of Resources within Property:  
Contributing: 1  
Non-Contributing:  
Number of Contributing Resources previously listed: 0  
Name of related multiple property listing: Iditarod Trail, Connecting Trails, and Associated Properties Within the Chugach National Forest.
6. Function or Use:  
Historic Functions: Transportation/Pedestrian-related  
Current Functions: Transportation/Pedestrian-Related
7. Description:

The Crow Pass Trail was part of the Iditarod Trail and is considered to be part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (Iditarod National Historic Trail 1982). Only those portions of the trail within the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest are described herein. The surveyed and described trail segment begins at the boundary of the Chugach National Forest in NE1/4 Section 4, T.10N-R.2E, about two miles northeast of Alyeska, and extends to the northern boundary of the Chugach National Forest in SW1/4 Section 4, T.11N-R.2E. A segment of about 1.75 miles of the trail within the Forest boundaries, in Sections 21, 27, and 28, T.11N-R.2E is private property; this private segment of trail was cursorily examined in 1990 and is described below. Appended to this evaluation form are copies of appropriate U.S.G.S. quadrangle maps which depict specific trail segments and sites discussed below.

The ca. 1911 wagon road and dogsled trail probably coincides with the current gravel road from the Forest boundary in Section 4, T.10N-R.2E (Point "A" on attached map) northward to the Crow Creek trailhead in Section 21, T.11N-R.2E (Point "C"). Topography recommends the route of the current road as the general

location of the earlier road and trail. Transect surveys at six locations between the Forest Boundary (Point "A") and the southern edge of patented private property (Point "B") yielded no indication of trails alternate to the current road. Transects were extended from the current roadway eastward to Glacier and Crow Creeks and westward to the effective topographic limit of road construction at the base of mountain slopes. Several trail segments less than one-fourth mile long were observed in areas upslope to the west of the current trail, but none of these segments exhibited extensive construction or other evidence of having been a part of the earlier wagon road. This area is dense rain forest and was logged extensively during construction of the Alaska Railroad in 1915-1918 and perhaps earlier and later; at least some of the side-trails are attributable to logging operations.

The trail segment within patented private property (between Points "B" and "D") were visually examined from the current gravel road and trail only, and evidence was not observed that the early trail/wagon road might have followed routes other than the current road and Forest Service trail. Cross-transects were not walked in this area, but the absence of heavy tree growth in much of the area allowed generally good visibility. Topography recommends that the early trail/road generally followed the route of the current gravel road, particularly northward from the current Crow Pass trailhead (Point "C"). From the bridge across Crow Creek in extreme NE1/4 Section 28 to the trailhead, the early trail/road could have followed a route nearer to Crow Creek than does the current gravel road, but this area has been extensively disturbed during placer mining, and trail remnants were not observed there.

At the Crow Pass Trail trailhead, the trail begins a rapid ascent by means of a series of switchbacks. The trailhead area is identified as "The Cache" on the 1960 U.S.G.S. topographic map, probably to reflect former storage of goods and vehicles there during much of the year when vehicle travel above would have been very difficult. A cursory examination of the trailhead area did not yield evidence of cache structures. The area contains a graveled parking lot, well, and privies which are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service.

The early dogsled trail appears to coincide with the current Crow Pass Trail from the trailhead (Point "C") to the northern edge of the private property inholding (Point "D"). The steep slopes in this area would allow

little variation in route for a sled road, and neither field examination nor aerial photographs or other archival sources yielded evidence of other possible trail routes in this vicinity. The trail is cut into steep slopes or occupies very narrow benches on the slopes through most of this area. The trail is six to eight feet wide, except where it has slumped off or has been partially covered by talus movement; in many areas the full width of the trail/wagon road is obscured from view by encroaching lush alder and other vegetation. The dense vegetation ends very near the Forest boundary. The trail in this area is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service, and vehicle traffic is precluded by concrete barriers at the trailhead.

The current Crow Creek Trail is cut into an active talus slope from the Forest Boundary (Point "D") northward to Point "G" in N1/2SW1/4 Section 16, T.11N-R.2E. Sparse vegetation and steep slopes allow very good visibility in this area. At Point "E" in NW/NW Section 21 are two ephemeral trail segments, about 30 meters and 50 meters above the current Crow Creek Trail. These segments are each about 100 meters long and about 1 meter wide. Two limited localities of these segments exhibit minimal cutting or rock placement, but evidence of grading was not observed. Both segments dissipate into the general talus slope on north and south ends and were not observed to resume at any distance. The orientation of these segments indicates they would intersect the current Crow Pass Trail a short distance to the north of the observed segment locations. These segments may represent the earliest trail system, before the system was substantially improved for dogsleds and other freight transport.

At Point "F" the current trail intersects a large prospect trench which runs perpendicular and upslope from the trail. The trench runs about 100 meters upslope from the current trail, where it intersects with the Iditarod Trail switchback trail described below; the trench then changes direction slightly to the south and becomes much less distinct. Below the switchback road the trench is about 5 meters wide and up to 1 meter deep. Earth and stone are mounded up to 1.5 meters high on each side of the trench. Large rocks remain in the trench, and a rusted one-gallon syrup can was found partially buried in one berm of the trench.

Point "F" is the beginning of observed mining activity along the trail; from here northward to Point "H" the



current Crow Pass Trail runs through a general scatter of mining-related debris, equipment parts, and two loci of structural remains. One mine adit is near the current trail, within the Monarch Mine locus, and three other adits are high on the mountain slope to the east of the current Crow Pass Trail. The mining remains in this area are collectively recorded as the Monarch/Jewell District. This area is glacial moraine with soil development and relatively low relief.

The early trail appears to coincide with the current Crow Pass Trail at least from Point "F" to Point "G", but above the latter point the trail system has been obscured by mining development, including construction of roadways and possibly by construction of the current Crow Pass Trail. The early trail probably ran a short distance to the east of the current recreational trail between Points "G" and "H", at the base of the talus slope; this route would have been more direct and on an easier grade than the current recreational trail. Vague evidence of trail segments exist in the assumed original route in this area, but this area has been disturbed by mining activities and the origin of the observed trail segments is not clear. At Point "H" the current recreational trail meets and ascends a very steep talus slope, which would have been virtually impassible in winter for dogsleds and extremely difficult for men on foot. Two alternate routes of this steep footpath were observed, neither of which were more than 1 meter wide and neither of which exhibited grading or other substantial improvement.

The original trail may have ascended the talus slide just to the southeast of Point "H", where faint remains of a switchback trail ascend the gentlest available slope up the talus slide to an intersection with the improved trail/road described below. The origin of this switchback trail is not certain, because it ascends in a nearly direct line from the base of the talus slide near the Monarch Mine headquarters and mill to a point below one of the mine adits on the mountain face. However, the switchback trail terminates at the intersection of the improved trail/road, some 150-200 meters below the mine adit. This switchback route meets the assumed original trail route described above and appears to be consistent with a 1906 description:

From the end of the railroad ..., a good sled road while the snow is on runs to Turnagain Arm ... From there it runs up Glacier creek, and its tributary, Crow creek, to a low summit. On this slope is the only difficult

pass of the whole route. Near the top is a climb of 1700 feet in half a mile. Freight has to be carried up this ascent to the top in small loads (Seward Weekly Gateway 9/08/1906).

About one-third mile south of the valley head, at Point "G", an improved dogsled trail/wagon road departs from the current Crow Pass Trail. This is probably the dogsled route constructed in 1911. The road gradually ascends the talus slope about 300 meters in a southeasterly direction, then switches to a northerly direction and continues a gradual ascent along the talus slide to the head of the valley. The lower segment of the road is about 2.5 meters wide, has a nearly flat roadbed, and has stones stacked along each side in a curbing. The lower segment is heavily overgrown with alders, and for this reason is very distinct when viewed from the head of the valley. The generally north-south segment of the route crosses an active talus slide, and consequently the road has been largely obscured in some areas. However, the original 6 to 8 foot width of the road is evident in some limited localities, and dry-laid stone curbing exists on the outer edge of the roadway in some localities. The roadway is very distinct at the valley head, where it is cut into the glacial moraine. A metal bed frame was found mid-way along the north-south segment of the road, and mining-related cables and machinery were found on and adjacent to the old roadway near the adits described above.

The old road rejoins the current Crow Pass Trail at Point "I", nearly directly east of Crystal Lake. Several hundred meters to the north, at Point "J" is a U.S. Forest Service A-frame cabin on stone piers, built in 1969, and a small gabled frame privy built after 1969. From Point "I" northward to the actual summit, at Point "K", the current Crow Pass Trail appears to coincide with the early trail route, but evidence of trail/road construction was not observed. Ground surface visibility is very good in this area because of lack of vegetation. No other possible routes for the early trail/wagon route were observed here. A number of small stone cairns exist in this high, relatively level area, both immediately adjacent to the current trail and up to 100 meters from the current trail. The cairns do not appear to be a single alignment marking the current or former trail routes, but may represent former variations of the winter route.

Point "K" is about 30 meters north of the U.S. Forest Service summit marker for Crow Pass; at this point a large stone cairn marks a split in the trail. The left fork of the trail continues almost directly north from the cairn until it dissipates into a rough talus slide and/or a snowfield about 250 meters north of the cairn. The right trail fork departs to the northeast near the cairn, descends a rock slope as a narrow switchback trail, crosses a snowfield (late June 1990), and ascends a narrow glacial ridge. The trail is seldom more than 1 meter wide from the cairn to the top of the glacial ridge, but some improvement is evident in the switchback alignment and stacking of stones in a curbing at the edges of the trail.

At the south end of the glacial ridge, the trail turns northwestward and follows the ridgetop to the Forest boundary (Point "L"). The trail can then be seen extending to the north, along the west side of the Raven Creek drainage. The glacial ridge is composed of mostly large, angular stones and boulders, which make even foot travel difficult in the summer. The trail route on the ridge exhibits varying improvement, from relatively level segments up to three meters wide to virtually no improvement or marking near the north end. The ridge has steep lateral walls and a narrow summit, and the snowfield (glacier?) on the west side of the ridge appears to be actively eroding the ridge. Portions of the trail have recently caved away in two areas of the ridge, and it is possible that much of the original trail/wagon road has been eroded.

Evidence of an improved dogsled trail or wagon road was not observed northward from Point "J", but the topography leaves little opportunity for a route other than the current path as far north as Point "K". Also, there is very little vegetation and little opportunity for deposition of rock over the trail; consequently, any substantial road improvements should have been evident at the time of survey. One possibility is that the trail descended into the Raven Creek drainage on the snowfield between the ridge and Raven Glacier, rather than on the narrow ridge spine (the snowfield to the west of the ridge appears to be too steep at its base to allow easy ascent or descent). The ragged rock slopes of the area would have been deeply covered with snow in winter, which would have allowed easy access to the snowfield from the top of the pass. The absence of switchbacks and well-defined trail on the relatively steep north and south ends of the ridge also suggests another route was used for dogsled travel.

8. Statement of Significance:

Significance Level: National/State/Local

Applicable Criteria: A, C.

Areas of Significance: Transportation

Period of Significance: 1898-1918

Significant Dates:

Significant Person:

Architect/Builder:

State significance of property:

The Crow Pass Trail was a segment of the primary route of the Iditarod Trail; segments retaining essential integrity are significant under National Register Criterion A for association with an important event or broad pattern in history.

The date of origin of the trail across Crow Pass is unclear. The trail route may have been used in prehistoric or protohistoric times by Native peoples, but evidence of such use has not been found. At least a lower portion of the trail was probably used in 1895, when placer gold prospecting began in earnest on Glacier Creek, but the route over Crow Pass apparently remained largely unknown and unused. In 1898 W.C. Mendenhall of the U.S. Geological Survey travelled up Glacier and Crow creeks, over Crow Pass, and down Raven Creek and Eagle River to Knik, to determine if a route existed which might be suitable for transporting mail to the Alaskan interior. Mendenhall found prospectors working placer deposits on upper Crow Creek, but he could get no information from them about the country on the other side of the pass. Mendenhall recorded the route northward from the summit and later reported his opinion of the route:

We climbed down from the divide along a slope of angular rubble, which gave very precarious footing, and passed the end of a small glacier, the principal feeder of the stream whose valley we were entering. We found one prospecting party here, whose members had called the stream Raven Creek but they could not tell us whether its waters eventually reached Turnagain Arm or Knik Arm.

Another route, followed by the writer in company with Mr. Kelly this summer, is by way of Glacier and Yukla creeks [Eagle River], and appears on the general map of the season's routes. The divide stands at 3,750 feet above tide, and is reached only by rather difficult



climbs over rubble slopes, which give uncertain footing. This route appears not to have been known before, and although starting from near the head of Turnagain Arm will probably not be much used except by prospectors who may wish to reach Raven Creek or other of the upper tributaries of the Yukla, from Sunrise. A pack trail could be constructed over it, but not without considerable outlay (Mendenhall 1898:278-279, 303)

Rich placer gold deposits were discovered on Crow Creek in 1895 and 1896, and many prospectors from the Kenai Peninsula mining districts to the south staked claims on Crow Creek, Glacier Creek, and the tributaries of these streams. The Crow Creek Consolidated Mine Company was formed in 1898 and began extensive placer mining near the confluence of Crow and Glacier creeks. This operation became the most successful placer gold mine in the Turnagain-Knik region (Carberry 1979:114). Hydraulic equipment was installed possibly as early as 1898 but certainly by 1906, and massive amounts of earth and gravel were excavated and washed for gold (Mendenhall 1898:278; Seward Weekly Gateway 8/25/1906). The mine headquarter complex is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other substantial placer mines on Crow Creek included that of James Girdwood about two miles upstream from the Crow Creek Consolidated Gold Mine.

Conrad Hories found gold lode deposits on a mountain face at the northern end of Crow Creek in the summer of 1909, and a minor prospecting rush to the area occurred that fall and during 1910. Hories' claims were developed as the Barnes/Monarch Mine, and at least two other small hard-rock gold mines were also active at the upper end of the valley between 1909 and 1940. Equipment including stamp and ball mills were hauled up the trail to the mines after 1920, by means of either horse-drawn sled or small caterpillar tractor. The Crow Pass Trail passes through the area of hardrock mining development, which is designated the Monarch/Jewell Mining District.

The earliest improvement of the Crow Pass Trail was associated with a need to transport equipment and supplies to the placer mines on Crow Creek. In 1899 the owners of the Crow Creek Consolidated Mine built a road from the shore of Turnagain Arm to their mine, and in 1903 the road was apparently extended to Girdwood's

claims (Barry 1973:99-100, 106; Reger and Antonson 1976:4).

The Crow Pass Trail appears came into general use by prospectors traveling from the Kenai Peninsula to the interior and northwest of Alaska after the rich gold strikes at Nome in 1898 and Fairbanks in 1903. Use of the trail benefitted from the establishment of the year-round port at Seward in 1903 and the construction of the Alaska Central Railroad northward from Seward beginning in 1902. By 1906 the railroad had been completed about 48 miles from Seward, and clearing and grading had been completed around the head of Turnagain Arm to Kern Creek, about four miles from the mouth of Glacier Creek. The railhead remained at Kern Creek effectively until the railroad was completed through Anchorage to the Matanuska Valley in 1918.

Coastal mining areas could be supplied largely by boat during summer months, but costal areas to the north of Seward remained ice-bound for many months, and the transportation season on interior rivers was even shorter. The need and demand for overland transportation routes increased dramatically with gold rushes to the Innoko Mining District in 1906-1907 and to the Iditarod Mining District in 1909-1912.

The volume of travel over the Crow Pass Trail before 1906 is unknown, but it clearly was minor in comparison with other major trails (Spude 1982:164). However, the trail was heavily used in 1906-1907 rushes to the interior, primarily as a winter route for dogsleds and men afoot. The route was promoted with some reservation by the editor of the Seward newspaper in January, 1906.

The old Crow creek trail is still available. It turns off at the mouth of Glacier creek on mile 75 [of the railroad route], and runs up that creek and its tributary, Crow creek, to the divide; thence over to Eagle valley. The trouble with this trail is that it is very steep near the summit, and the snowslides are dangerous. It is unsafe for one man to travel it alone. On this trail it is ten miles from timber to timber ... (Seward Weekly Gateway 1/20/1906).

The threat from snowslides was most acute in the early spring. In late March, 1906, the Seward Weekly Gateway reported that three men had been rescued after having been buried by a snowslide near Crow Pass, and that the

deteriorating conditions would end a considerable volume of traffic over the trail.

This side of Crow creek pass Mr. Herning met thirty-one mushers headed for the Yentna. He thinks they are about the end of the procession to that district until after the spring break-up lets men through in boats by way of the inlet and up the river... the slides are becoming so frequent on the slopes around Crow creek pass that it will soon be foolhardy to travel that way ... (Seward Weekly Gateway 3/24/1906)

Every new account of the rush to the Yentna adds to the number who are said to have gone into the district, or at least started over the trail. Frank Watson ... reported that a large number of men have crossed over the range from Valdez and gone in by way of the creeks above Knik Arm. The number of these is uncertain but is probably 100 and may be greater. The number who have gone from Seward and the railroad camps is placed ... at not less than 400. ...Mr. Watson repeats the warning already given that Crow creek pass is becoming dangerous because of the frequent slides ... Because of this several parties turned back and are now waiting at Glacier creek for a chance to get around the Arm in boats (Seward Weekly Gateway 3/31/1906).

By February, 1907 travelers on the Crow Pass Trail were served by one and possibly three roadhouses. A Glacier Creek Roadhouse may have been established as early as 1903 in the Girdwood settlement near the mouth of Glacier Creek, and this roadhouse was certainly in operation by 1911 (DeArmond 1962:40-41; Smith 1974:54). Farther up the trail, the Crow Creek Roadhouse was operated by E.W. Young in February, 1907, supposedly near the top of Crow Pass (Seward Weekly Gateway, 2/9/1907). However, a 1913 map indicates the Crow Creek Roadhouse was to the south of the actual pass, possibly in the vicinity of the current Crow Pass Trail trailhead (Alaska Road Commission 1913).

The same 1913 map indicates the existence of Raven Creek Roadhouse on the north side of Crow Pass about 8 miles north of the Crow Creek Roadhouse, probably near the confluence of Raven Creek and Eagle River. In September, 1913 men named Frisbie and Murray were

reported to operate a roadhouse at Raven Creek (Seward Daily Gateway 9/8/1913).

Information about these roadhouses is extremely sparse, and it is possible that the establishments were housed in tents and operated sporadically. Maps in 1909 and 1914 Alaska Road Commission reports do not contain notation of these roadhouses, and the roadhouses are not mentioned in the report of the official 1908 survey of the Crow Pass segment of the Iditarod Trail. A map in the 1916 report of the Alaska Road Commission again indicates the locations of the Crow Creek and Raven Creek roadhouses, but this map appears to be a slight adaptation of the 1913 map. Physical remains of neither roadhouse have been found.

The Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska was formed in 1905 to investigate and promote construction of trails and roads in the Territory. In the early months of 1908 the Commission sent a reconnaissance party under command of George E. Pulham to determine the feasibility of a winter trail from the head of Cook Inlet to Kaltag on the Yukon River. The route mapped by this party would become most of the Iditarod Trail after it was extended to the Iditarod gold fields. The party traveled the Crow Pass Trail, and the Commission later reported on the route:

The Board believes this to be an important line of winter communication through the country, but the best results from its construction will not come until after the Alaska Central Railroad shall have been extended as far as Knik at the head of Cook's Inlet and until some other further developments take place in the Kuskokwim and Innoko districts. Both these conditions, however, will, it is thought, be fulfilled within another year (Alaska Road Commission 1908:95).

W.L. Goodwin, the party's engineer, was more explicit about the Crow Pass route:

Up Glacier Creek from mile 75 to 85 we had no difficulty as a sled road was being operated to Girdwood at mile 82, but over Crow Pass it would be out of the question to handle Nome mail with an ascent of 45 degrees for the last 1500 feet and to an altitude of 3550 feet and then down nearly as steep some

places to Raven Creek and on down to Eagle River 9 miles below (Goodwin 1908:3).

The railroad was not completed to the head of Knik arm until 1918, and substantial new gold rushes to the Ruby and Iditarod areas served to increase use of the Crow Pass Trail in the period 1909-1912. In the fall of 1908 the Alaska Road Commission substantially upgraded a trail along Turnagain Arm from Girdwood to Bird Creek, so that the trail through Indian Pass could be used to avoid the avalanche problems and steep grades of the Crow Pass Trail (Alaska Road Commission 1909:25-26). Indian Pass was some 1200 feet lower than Crow Pass, but the Indian Pass Trail was 15 to 20 miles longer than the Crow Pass Trail and had about five miles of difficult trail compared to one mile of steep climb on the Crow Pass Trail. The Indian Pass Trail also had avalanche hazards, and early in its first season was closed by snowslides between Girdwood and Bird Creek, which again routed traffic through Crow Pass (Seward Weekly Gateway 1/2/1909).

A mail route was established from Seward to Girdwood, Crow Creek, Knik, Susitna and Tyonok. Mail not to exceed 100 pounds each way per trip was to be carried once per month between January 1 and March 31, 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 1/2/1909). The long-awaited Seward to Iditarod winter mail service was inaugurated in 1914, but it was discontinued by 1919 when the railroad was constructed to the north side of the Alaska range and mail was again carried along the Yukon Trail (Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1977:44).

Between November 9, 1910 and February 25, 1911, a surveying party led by W.L. Goodwin mapped and marked what would be popularly known as the Iditarod Trail from Nome to Seward. Goodwin's party apparently crossed the Indian Pass Trail to Turnagain Arm; he noted distances and the existence of a roadhouse on the Indian Pass Trail but did not note distances for the Crow Pass route (Alaska-Yukon Magazine 1911:55). In March, 1911, Congress appropriated \$50,000 for improvement of a winter trail from Seward to Iditarod, and the Alaska Road Commission immediately began improving the trail system (Iditarod Pioneer 4/1/1911).

The Crow Pass Trail was upgraded and in some places substantially rebuilt during 1911 to lessen grades and avoid some areas prone to snowslides (Brooks et al. 1912:137). The specific location and nature of

improvements is unknown, except for information provided in the Alaska Road Commission report for 1912:

Route 19--Kern Creek-Knik Trail (60 miles)-- During September and October, 1911, the trail was completed from Crow Creek Pass to Kern Creek. The construction was more elaborate than the average for trail construction. Unit costs were: Grading, side hill, about 6 feet wide, per mile \$778.68; clearing, about 10 feet wide, per mile 80.00; pack bridge, stringer type, 124 feet long per linear foot \$1.93; Total \$800.61. The average cost of the section from Crow Creek to Kern Creek was \$220 per mile. The average cost of the entire route ... was \$168.69 per mile (Alaska Road Commission 1912:15)

The description of grading in this report seems consistent with construction of the long switch-back trail on the west-facing talus slope near the head of Crow Creek. The switch-back trail is shown clearly in a photograph in the 1913 report of the Alaska Road Commission (Alaska Road Commission 1913:Plate 7).

The editor of the Iditarod Pioneer had predicted the completion of a road suitable for 4-horse teams over Crow Pass in time for the 1911-1912 winter travel season, but a road of this quality would never be built over the pass (Iditarod Pioneer 11/26/1911). A map accompanying U.S. Geological Survey report for 1911 indicates a trail from the end of the railroad at Kern Creek to Glacier Creek, a road from that point to just above the mouth of Crow Creek, and a trail from there over the pass to Raven Creek (Brooks, et al. 1912:162). Evidence has not been found that the Crow Pass Trail was ever improved beyond its 1911 construction, nor that the Raven Creek drainage portion of the trail was ever substantially improved. The trail was maintained, particularly by means of staking of the pass area to mark the trail for travelers in stormy weather (Seward Daily Gateway 9/8/1913; Alaska Road Commission 1913:23).

The completion of the railroad around the Turnagain Arm to Anchorage and beyond in 1918 resulted in the virtual abandonment of the Crow Pass Trail, other than for use by miners on Crow Creek. In 1921 the Alaska Road Commission relocated about one mile of the ten miles of wagon road running from the railroad to the Crow Creek Mining District, and in 1922 the ten miles of wagon road were turned over to the Department of Agriculture



to become part of the forest highway system. However, in 1925 the Alaska Road Commission constructed seven miles of wagon road along Crow Creek, apparently to the current Crow Pass Trail trailhead (DeArmond 1962:41; Alaska Road Commission 1921:33).

The Crow Pass Trail is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with the important event/pattern of overland dogsled transportation in Alaska during the period 1906 to 1918. The Crow Pass Trail was a conduit for winter travel at least as early as 1906, and thousands of gold prospectors followed this trail during gold rushes in the Yentna, Innoko, and Iditarod mining districts, and possibly to the Fairbanks District prior to the establishment of a government trail system. The Crow Pass Trail is specifically associated with this pattern because from 1911 to 1918 it was a segment of the primary route of the Iditarod Trail, which connected the all-season port of Seward with Nome and the gold mining districts in the interior of Alaska. Crow Pass was the highest point on the Iditarod Trail and by many accounts was the most difficult part of the 900-plus mile trail.

The Crow Pass Trail has substantially varied integrity within the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest. The ca. 1898-1918 trail appears to coincide very closely with the current graded vehicle road between the Forest boundary to the north of the town of Girdwood and the current Crow Pass Trail trailhead, but integrity of design, materials, and feeling have been lost as a result of reconstruction of the road and adjacent commercial and residential development since 1918. The portion of the trail between the Crow Pass Trail trailhead and the Forest Boundary to the north of Crow Pass has generally excellent integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. A portion of the original trail has been obscured within the former Monarch Mine complex, but the switchback trail ascending to the valley head is intact and dramatically represents the difficulties of dogsled travel over the Iditarod Trail.

The segment of the trail from the current Crow Pass Trail trailhead northward to the Forest boundary is recommended to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The segment to the south of the trailhead is not recommended to be nominated because it lacks requisite integrity to represent the theme of dogsled travel in the period 1898-1918.

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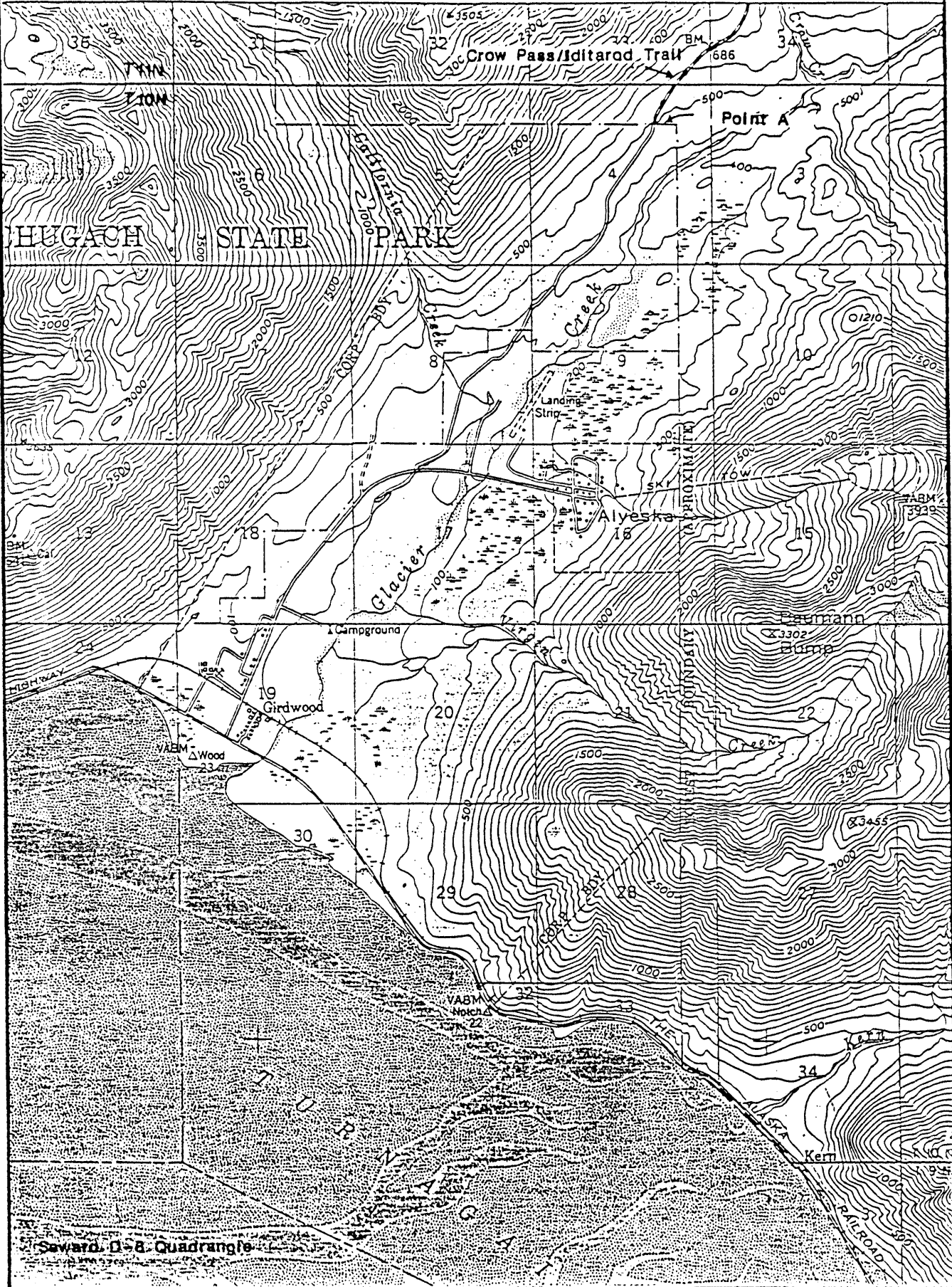
Iditarod Pioneer, Iditarod, Alaska. April 1, 1911.

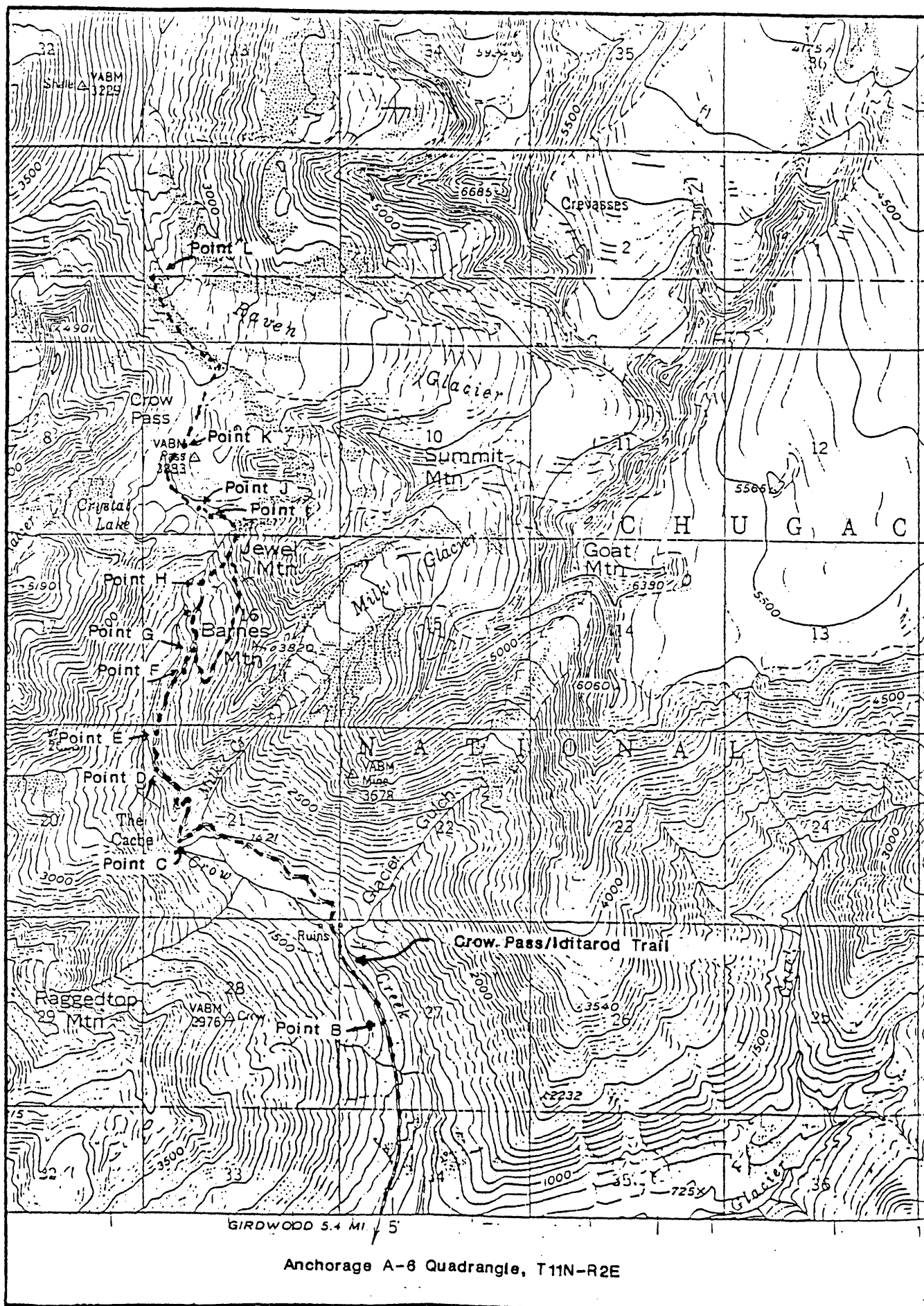
Seward Weekly Gateway/Seward Daily Gateway, Seward, Alaska. Various dates 1905-1920.

R. 1 E. R. 2 E. 10'

GIRDWOOD MINE 2.1 MI. 15'

(ANCHORAGE)





Crow Pass Trail



Trail in Sec. 21, T11N-R2E, View to North



Ephemeral Trails in NW/NW Sec. 21, T11N-R2E, View South



Crow Pass Trail



Southern Portion of Switchback Dogsled Trail in Sec. 16  
Current Trail in Foreground, View to ESE



Switchback Dogsled Trail Panorama Frame 1, Southern End  
View to South from Head of Valley

Crow Pass Trail



Switchback Trail, Panorama View No. 2, View to SE  
Note Current Trail in Foreground



Switchback Trail, Panorama View No. 3, View to SE

Crow Pass Trail

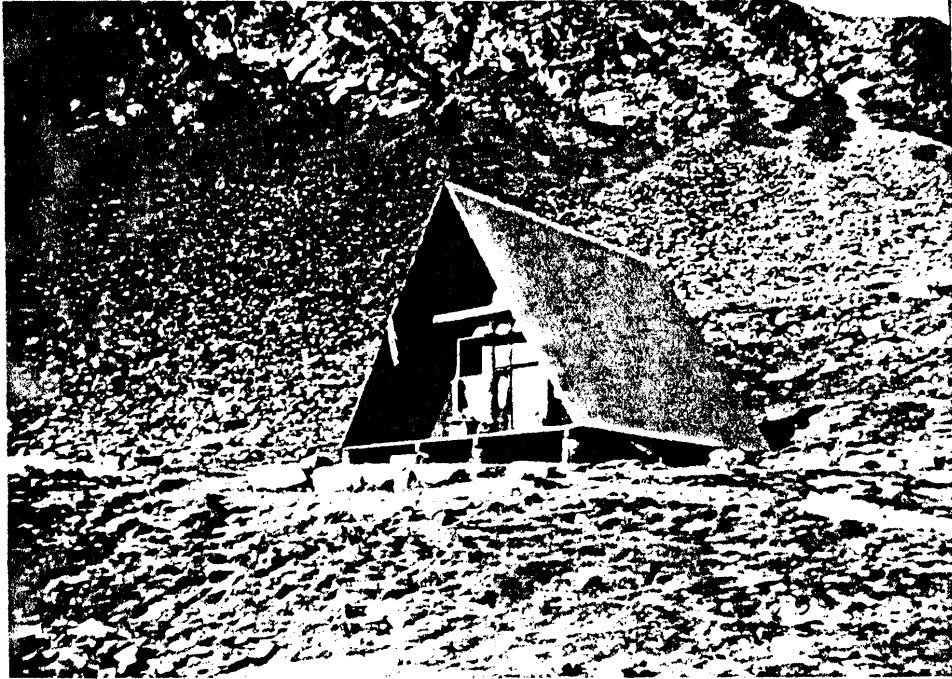


Switchback Trail, Panorama View No. 4 Near North End  
View to East

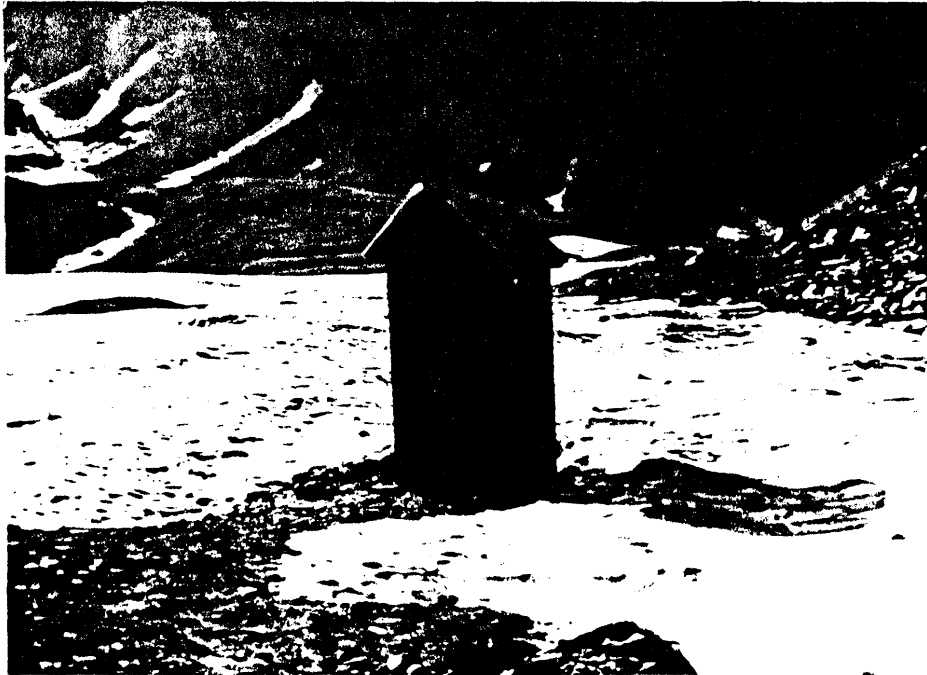


Junction of Switchback Trail and Current Trail, View to SE  
Note Monument CRMIDIT#1 (Cairn)

Crow Pass Trail



Forest Service Rest Cabin in Sec. 9, T11N-R2E  
View to East



Privy at Forest Service Rest Cabin

Crow Pass Trail



Crow Pass Marker and Cairn at Monument CRMIDIT#2, View S.  
NW/SW Section 9, T11N-R2E

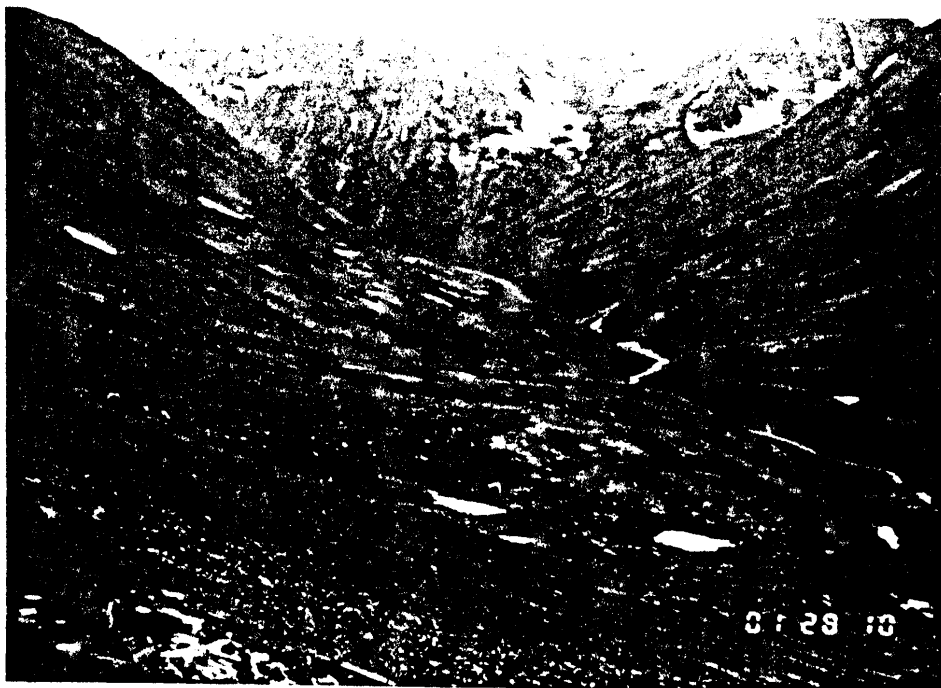


Cairn at Forest Boundary in NW/SW Sec. 4, T11N-R2E  
Cairn Contains Monument CRMIDIT#3

Crow Pass Trail



Switchback Trail in SW Sec. 9, T11N-R2E, View SE



View to SSE from Switchback Trail below Monarch Mine Adits  
NW Sec. 16, T11N-R2E. Note Switchback Trail in Distance,  
Current Trail on Right, and Mining Debris Lower Left.



Crow Pass Trail



Trail Along Rubble Ridge in Sec. 4, T11N-R2E  
View to South from Monument CRMIDIT#3



Trail to North of Forest Boundary in Sec. 4, T11N-R2E  
View to North

Crow Pass Trail



View Southward from Trail in SW/NW Sec. 21, T11N-R2E.  
Note Parking Lot at Trailhead at Right and Current  
Gold Placer Operation at Center