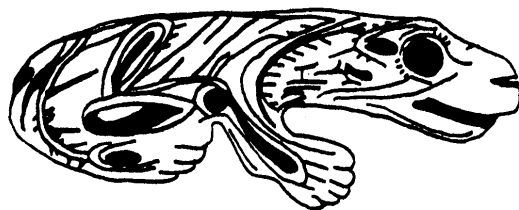


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POTTER-GIRDWOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SITE SURVEY

By

Douglas R. Reger and Joan M. Antonson

A field survey of archaeological and historic resources was conducted along the Seward Highway between Potter and Girdwood by staff of the Alaska Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources. The fieldwork, accomplished during June and July, 1976, was conducted for the Alaska Department of Highways under the terms of a reimbursable services agreement. Impetus for the study came from the National Environmental Policy Act and Department of Transportation and State of Alaska regulations dealing with cultural resources.

The area covered by this survey was limited primarily to the highway right-of-way corridor between Potter (MP 115) and Girdwood (MP 90) with some divergences to include significant properties in the immediate vicinity. Personnel involved in fieldwork included Douglas R. Reger, State Archaeologist; Joan M. Antonson, Historian; R. Greg Dixon, Archaeologist; and Steven Gregory, Research Assistant. Methodology used in the fieldwork consisted of document research, informant interviews and field investigation. Areas along the route such as existing road or railroad cuts below high rock cliffs and recent snowslide chutes were eliminated from consideration. Mud flats were also eliminated as probable areas of site occurrence. All other areas were examined on foot with testing where considered appropriate. Most areas exhibited cut banks or similar exposures which were examined. Four prehistoric archaeological sites and thirty-one historic sites are present along the project route (See Map 1).

Project Area

The area covered by this study is generally the north shore of Turnagain Arm between Potter Railway Station and Girdwood, 40 kilometers (25 miles) apart. The terrain along 85% of the route is very steep, rising from sea level to mountains in excess of 1,000 meters high. The coast line is rocky except at the mouths of Bird Creek and Indian Creek Valleys.

Turnagain Arm is a submerged and alluvium filled glacial trough. Borings made during feasibility studies for a highway crossing of Turnagain Arm indicate a depth of bedrock in excess of 90 meters (290 feet) below sea level. During the last major glacial advance, ice filled the trough and extended to the Fire Island vicinity (Karlstrom, 1964: PL 6). Sediments deposited in the post-glacial interval are primarily silts and sands with only small amounts of clay and gravel. Most gravels are found at the mouths of major drainage systems (Ovenshine, et al., 1975:5).

Faunal resources which would be important to aboriginal inhabitants are Dall sheep, mountain goats, possibly caribou in the past, moose, beluga whales, salmon, and eulachon (a type of smelt). Salmon spawn primarily in Bird Creek and Indian Creek in the project area.

Dominant tree types in the area are spruce, birch, and aspen, depending on slope and moisture. In more densely vegetated areas, undercover includes alders, devil's club, and berry bushes.

History

Although Cook Inlet was not explored or mapped by the early Russian expeditions, its existence was known. Alexei Chirikov's journal entry for 4 August 1741 notes the sighting of land that, from the description, is believed to be the southern coast of the Kenai Peninsula (Golder, 1968:I, 298). As news of the Bering and Chirikov expeditions circulated, other European powers sent exploring teams to the North Pacific. In 1776, George III of England was persuaded to finance an expedition, captained by James Cook, "To Determine the Position and Extent of the West Side of North America; Its Distance from Asia; and the Practicability of a Northwestern Passage to Europe" (Beaglehole, 1967).

When the Resolution and Discovery reached Cook Inlet in May, 1778, Cook's expedition had already recorded the existence of many previously unknown regions in the Pacific Ocean. After describing and naming landmarks around the entrance of the inlet, among them Cape Elizabeth at the southwestern tip of the Kenai Peninsula and Mount St. Augustin, Cook wrote:

We also thought that there was a passage to the northwest between Cape Douglas and Mt. St. Augustin. In short, it was imagined that the land on our larboard, to the north of Cape Douglas, was composed of a group of islands, disjoined by so many channels, any one of which we might make use of according as the wind should serve (Braglehoer, 1967: III: 361).

To determine if they had found the long-sought Northwest Passage, the party sailed north and discovered that what they had believed to be islands were mountain peaks connected by land that had been obscured by the haze. Cook became convinced that the inlet was not the Northwest Passage, yet ordered the expedition to continue sailing northeast. When the tides prevented the ships from entering a waterway along the east coast, two small boats were dispatched to examine the shore and observe the tides. Before accomplishing the assignments, the boats were repelled by the tides. Cook aptly recorded his experiences by assigning the name River Turnagain to this waterway. His journal contained a short general description:

On the north side of the river, the low land again begins, and stretches out from the foot of the mountains, down to the banks of the great river; so that, before the river Turnagain, it forms a large bay, on the south side of which we were now at anchor; and where we had from twelve to five fathoms, from half-flood to high-water. (Beaglehole 1967: III, 366).

The next day the two small boats were again sent out. The crew was instructed to land on the lowland along the southeast shore of the inlet and north side of the arm, there to bury a bottle with some pieces of English coin dated 1772 and a dated paper listing the ship's names, to display the English flag and to claim the land in the name of King George III (Beaglehole 1967: III, 367). After this ceremony the expedition turned south.

Later that year Cook was killed in the Hawaiian Islands. The Resolution returned to England in 1779 and the journals were delivered to John Montague, Fourth Earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty, for whom Cook had named Montague Island. As Cook had not named the inlet in his journals, Montague directed that the waterway be entered on maps as Cook's River (Frederick, 1971: 4).

In 1794 a second English expedition, captained by George Vancouver, entered Cook Inlet. This scientific expedition spent a month mapping and describing the inlet's coast. Several of the terms Cook assigned to geographical features, such as Turnagain River and Cook's River, were revised for accuracy. A member of Vancouver's party searched for the bottle buried by the Cook expedition--it has never been recovered (Vancouver, 1798).

Prior to Vancouver's expedition the Russians began to establish trading posts in the North Pacific to insure their claims to the land. Settlements on the Kenai Peninsula were established by Lebedev-Lastochkin Fur Company representatives at Redoubt St. George (Kasilof) in 1786, and Redoubt St. Nicholas (Kenai) in 1791. After the various fur trading companies in Russian America merged in 1798 and were chartered as the Russian American Company a year later, operations at the Kenai Peninsula posts were continued (Bancroft, 1970: 375-384).

Although Russian traders and explorers, such as Malakov in 1834, reported the existence of gold and coal deposits in the Kenai Peninsula, not until 1849 did the Russian American Company commission an engineer (or, as he was then called, geonost), Petr Doroshin, to explore the region for minerals. Doroshin's report, the only record of such exploration sponsored by the Company, notes the discovery of "colors" (Doroshin, *mid.*). His discovery, almost simultaneous with the discovery of gold in California, brought no immediate rush to the region. In fact, Doroshin's subsequent requests to continue exploration were ignored.

Included in Doroshin's report was a recommendation that coal be mined at Kachemak Bay. Between 1855 and 1860, 2,760 tons of coal were mined at Coal Cove for use by Company steamers and in workshops at Sitka (Barry, 1973: 15). After coal operations were discontinued Enoch Hjalmar Furuhjelm, the Finnish engineer who supervised the mines, negotiated a contract with the Russian American Company granting him sole control of all mining in Russian America. The seven year lease stipulated that Furuhjelm would pay an annual royalty, and at the expiration of the contract all equipment would revert to the Company. Furuhjelm, however, could sell products and buy goods were he pleased, hire whomever he chose, use the Company flag, cut timber and use streams, and would not pay duty. The lease, concluded in 1863, was never in effect, initially, because of the uncertainty about renewal of the Company's charter. In 1867 Russia sold the territory to the United States, and the contract was void (Golder, 1916: 237-238).

American trappers entered the Upper Kenai Peninsula region prior to 1880, but no known records indicate that prospectors were there. After 1880, several small groups began to search for the "colors" reported by Doroshin. Joseph Cooper discovered gold in 1884 and four years later gold was found by a man named King near the present site of the town of Hope. After King's discovery the gold rush to the Upper Kenai Peninsula began. Seventy-one prospectors and citizens of Sitka submitted a petition to the Alaska Commercial Company in 1895 for additional boat service to the new gold fields. Specifically, they requested that the first boat in the spring go to the west coast of Prince William Sound, the other ships to Turnagain Arm (Potter, 1967: 13). By 1896 two supply centers, Hope and Sunrise, flourished boasting populations of 80 and 150 respectively (Barry, 1973: 60). Of interest, the exact location of Doroshin's "colors" has not been determined.

Late in the 1895 season, two workers for One-Eyed Riley on Bear Creek, F.J. Perry and Christopher Spillum, decided to prospect across Turnagain Arm. With another partner, Fred Crewe, they found gold in the gravels of California Creek, a tributary of Glacier Creek (Moffit, 1907: 9). The next year others prospected on the north side of the Arm, and gold was found in other tributaries of Glacier Creek and along Indian and Rainbow Creeks (Barry, 1973: 62).

Perhaps in 1896 the supply station for the northern extension of the mining district was established. That station, located where Glacier Creek flows into Turnagain Arm, became known as Girdwood's, after local prospector James E. Girdwood. In 1903 a road was cut to connect his claims on Crow Creek with the station. By that time, Raven Creek Roadhouse, an Alaska Central Railroad store, and a post office operated at the supply center (DeArmond, 1962: 40-41). Transportation between Hope and Crow Creek, \$10 per person, was available (Barry, 1973: 108). Several oral accounts insist that ferry service to Bird Point, owned by two brothers who lived in Hope, was in operation around five years earlier.

News of the Klondike strikes reached the Upper Kenai Mining District during the 1896 season, and the majority of the prospectors headed north. At the peak of the Upper Kenai Peninsula and Turnagain Arm mining rush an estimated 1,500 people were listed in the area.

United States Geological Survey geologist, Fred H. Moffit, wrote that over a million dollars in gold was mined from the Hope and Sunrise mining region between 1895 and 1904 (Moffit, 1904). He expressed a quite different impression two years later.

It is doubtful if there is any other part of the Alaska where time and money have been wasted in a more enthusiastically ignorant manner and concerning which stockholders in mining companies have been more utterly misled than some places on the Kenai Peninsula (Moffit, 1906: 2).

Although the rush was over by 1910, a number of companies continued to mine along tributaries of Glacier Creek. During the 1920's and 1930's a group of Anchorage men directed by Harry I. Staser worked along Crow Creek, neighbored by the Jewel Gold Mining Company, the Alaska-Crow Creek Mining Company, James Girdwood's LaTouche Mining Company, and the California Creek Mining Company, to name only a few. Reportedly, \$80,000 was spent for development of the Jewel properties, and the Alaska-Crow Creek Company built a hydraulic plant on 240 acres about two miles north of Girdwood (DeArmond, 1967: 40-41). Activity was extensive enough that in 1925 the Alaska Road Commission constructed seven miles of road north from Girdwood along Crow Creek (DeArmond, 1967: 40).

Mining activity throughout Alaska was curtailed by federal legislation passed during World War II. On 17 September 1941 the government enacted Preference Rating Order P-56 that excluded placer gold mining operations from obtaining equipment or services to repair and maintain machinery. A second act, Limitation Order L-208, passed by the War Production Board on 8 October 1942, closed all mines in the United States except those necessary for war materials production or those of less than five employees none of whom were eligible for war work (Barry, 1973: 167). After the war few companies found it profitable to continue mining operations. However, some individuals still mine along the tributaries of Glacier and Bird Creeks.

In 1898 the United States Government sponsored a major exploration project to map the territory for use in planning a system of trails, roads and railroads to the interior. With the immediate objective to supply Yukon River Army posts and to aid stranded prospectors and trappers in the territory, Captain Edwin F. Glenn and Lieutenant W.R. Mercrombie led expeditions. Glenn was assigned to explore the Prince William Sound region and locate established routes to the Copper, Susitna and Tanana Rivers. His report includes the names and locations of a number of mining claims staked on the north side of Turnagain Arm, and mentions the operation of a roadhouse at Indian Creek (Glenn, 1900).

The origins of most of the trails across the region north of Turnagain Arm are unknown or disputed. Records left by various participants in the 1895 gold rush recorded three major routes to the Upper Kenai Peninsula: from Prince William Sound at Portage Bay hiking across the glacier, following a rough trail north from Seward, or by steamer to Tyonek, from there by barge to Hope or Sunrise (Barry, 1973: 47-57). A "Map of Susitna, Knik and Matanuska Rivers, Knik and Turnagain Arm Showing Trails, & Boat Routes, Gold Fields, Etc." copyrighted by J.N. Johnston and O.G. Herning in 1899 shows eight major transportation routes through the region (Potter, 1967). With two exceptions, the Alaska Central Railroad survey trail and a government-cut path from Knik to the Tanana River, the routes are cited as native trails. The only route included on the map that connects the north shore of Turnagain Arm with Knik Arm and River is the railroad trail. A map, such as this one, drawn prior to comprehensive explorations of the region or perhaps to a revised version, is undoubtedly inaccurate. Nonetheless, the map is a valuable comparative source.

The major gold rushes to the Klondike, Nome, Tanana River and Iditarod regions resulted in the creation of many transportation routes in Alaska. At least by 1905 the Seward Trail was extended from Portage and Twenty-mile Creeks past Kern Creek, along Glacier and Crow Creeks to Eklutna and Knik where it connected with the Iditarod Trail west or Glenn's route to the Valdez Trail. When Congress authorized the establishment of a mail route between Seward and Knik with stops at Girdwood and Potter in 1911, a trail parallel to the north side of Turnagain Arm was cut (Potter, 1967: 19-23). Two winter supply routes, over Crow Pass (probably the Seward Trail) and Indian Pass that were heavily used during the 1907 rush to the Iditarod region, are still passable. The portion of the Crow Pass Trail from Girdwood along Glacier Creek was cut prior to the turn of the century, and the remainder of the route might have been open at the time (Nienhueser, 1972: 80-86). Several new trails were cut in 1915 and 1916 to facilitate railroad construction. Included was a telegraph trail south from Anchorage that extended at least to the Sheep Creek Construction Camp (Prince, 1964: 156). The use of trails through the Turnagain Arm region diminished when the Alaska Railroad was completed in 1918.

In 1900 (possibly a year or two earlier), John E. Ballaine convinced a group of Seattle businessmen to create the Alaska Central Railroad Company. The primary objective was to provide railroad transportation to the Matanuska Valley coal fields that would prompt development of the mines. Heading north from the year-round port at Seward, a railroad would also improve access to the Upper Kenai Peninsula gold region. In 1902 eight crews (79 men) under Chief Engineer C.M. Anderson began surveying the route, clearing, and constructing camps (Brown, 1975: 12). Two major camps along the north side of Turnagain Arm were recommended: at Girdwood--already a village, and where the route was to turn north, at a site they named Potter for a local trapper. Bird and Rainbow Creeks were included in the railroad survey report noted with Potter as

stopping points along the north side of the Arm. Mining companies were reported in operation along Indian and Rainbow Creeks, and a lumber company at Bird Creek was mentioned (Potter, 1967: 27-28).

The 1898 Homestead Act stipulated that railroads be built within four years, a minimum of twenty miles of track be constructed each year, and established an annual tax of \$100 per mile on operating track regardless of profit or loss. Because of this act and unexpected and increased costs, the Alaska Central went bankrupt in 1904 (Brown, 1975: 15-18). That year Franklin Joslin interested a group of Canadian entrepreneurs to form the Alaska Northern Railway Company and to purchase the Alaska Central right-of-way and rolling stock. The Board of Directors headquartered at Seattle. Between 1905 and 1907 clearing and grading was completed from Mile 45 (where the Alaska Central had stopped) to Mile 71 (Kern Creek). Construction during the next two seasons slowed, and in October, 1909 the company was reorganized. By 1915 track only extended to Kern Creek (Brown, 1975: 18-20). Expenses and uninformed management were leading the Alaska Northern toward bankruptcy when the United States Government selected the Seward to Fairbanks route for the government railroad and agreed to purchase the private road.

As pressure to create transportation routes to the interior of Alaska increased, an indirect result of the gold rushes, the numbers of failures by private enterprise to alleviate the needs multiplied. First, the federal government was convinced to cut a trail from the southern port of Valdez to Eagle on the Yukon. This route was restricted to winter travel, and freight charges were prohibitive. Pressure intensified for a railroad that would operate year-round. Initially, the government assigned the Alaska Road Commission to study the feasibility of railroad construction in the Territory and to assess the role the federal government should play. In 1912 the Alaska Railway Commission was established. President Taft appointed four men: Major Jay J. Morrow, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Dr. A.H. Brooks, U.S. Geological Survey, Lieutenant-Commander M. Cox, U.S. Navy, and Colin M. Ingersoll, a railroad engineer, to survey possible railroad routes in Alaska and submit a report. A second team, the Alaska Engineering Commission, was appointed in 1914. The three: Lieutenant Frederick Mears, W.C. Edes, and Thomas Riggs, Jr. were assigned the same activities as the earlier commission. Their report with more specific, less objective recommendations was submitted to President Woodrow Wilson in 1915. The Seward to Fairbanks route that the AEC supported was selected (Brown, 1975: 27-34).

The Alaska Engineering Commission concluded an agreement for the purchase of the Alaska Northern Railway land and rolling stock by August, 1915, but transfer of title was delayed pending the resolution of court suits against the private company (Brown, 1975: 21,34). During the 1915 season activity was restricted to projects that included repair of the track from Seward to Mile 34, construction of docks and warehouses at Seward, and repair of Alaska Northern rolling stock. The AEC revised their proposed construction plans for Turnagain Arm when they realized that the poor condition of the Alaska Northern created unanticipated delays. Rather than from the Seward Division, most of the construction

would be done by crews working south from Anchorage. The Anchorage District was made a division and subdivided into four districts, one of them Turnagain Arm from Girdwood to Anchorage (Brown, 1975: 40; AEC, 1915: 53).

During 1915 the railroad route from Kern Creek along Turnagain Arm was resurveyed. The Alaska Central Railroad Company survey (that the Alaska Northern inherited and adopted) planned the road to turn north at Potter Creek. The AEC altered the route to go through the construction camp and AEC headquarters at Anchorage (Potter, 1967: 28; Prince, 1964: I, 53). Work continued through the winter both north and south, although construction was focused on the Matanuska Branch from Anchorage to open the coal fields. Clearing and grading south from Anchorage began and by the end of the 1916 season operations had reached Rainbow Creek (AEC, 1916: 56). Most of this work, especially rock blasting was contracted out (AEC 1916: 118). One track laying crew was spared from the Matanuska District the same year, and ten miles of track south of Anchorage were completed (Brown, 1975: 40). Approximately 1,000 men were employed in the Anchorage Division during the winter 1917, camped in the Turnagain District. Along all the creeks camps were located: Potter, Sheep, McHugh, Falls, Rainbow and Bird. District headquarters moved from Potter to Rainbow to Falls, apace with construction (AEC, 1917: 246). Construction slowed during spring, 1918, waiting for additional funds and supplies. When five million dollars became available July 1, 1918, track crews from both Seward and Anchorage Divisions worked to unite the line (Brown, 1975: 41). Imitating earlier railroads built in the United States, a rivalry was created, both divisions vying to extend the track beyond Mile 79. The Anchorage Division won, and on September 17, 1918 at Mile 78.75 William C. Edes (the only one of the original commissioners still with AEC) drove the final spike connecting Seward with the Matanuska coal fields (Prince, 1964: 247).

Construction of the Turnagain Arm section of the Alaska Railroad was difficult and expensive even with the advantage of water access. Over thirty miles of rock required blasting, and extensive bridge work had to be done. The original construction cost estimate for the Arm was \$77,000 per mile. In reality, the cost was around \$200,000 per mile (Brown, 1975: 45; Prince, 1964: 11, 1045).

After the railroad was completed, sections were organized at sites that had been temporary construction camps: Girdwood (Mile 75), Bird Creek (Mile 83), Indian (Mile 88), Rainbow (Mile 94), and Potter (Mile 100.6). These sections, all flag stops except Girdwood, were discontinued in the 1950's. Over the years road repairs, usually because of snowslides, were required. During 1949 much of the track along the Arm was relocated. An Anchorage to Seward highway was built in 1950 and 1951, financed by the Interior Department but built under the supervision of the Alaska Railroad and Road Commission using a number of the old railroad beds (Prince, 1964: 11, 795, 808). In 1954 the highway was hard surfaced.

The high tides that followed the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake more than the tremor itself, caused the severe damage to the north shore of Turnagain Arm. The town of Girdwood flooded, and has been relocated. The road and railroad through that area and around Bird Creek were rebuilt and raised eight to nine feet. A number of residents relocated at Indian or Girdwood from Bird and Kern Creek villages. In 1970 Chugach State Park was established, and most of the land north of the highway became part of the park.

Historic Sites

ANC-050 Mrs. Johnson's Roadhouse Site

Location: Seward Highway Mile 115.3, The Alaska Railroad
Mile 100, near Potter Station.

Aside from reports that the roadhouse operated prior to and during construction of the railroad between Seward and Anchorage, little is known about the site. No remains.

ANC-075 Potter Station (Figs. 1 and 2)

Location: Seward Highway Mile 115.3, The Alaska Railroad
Mile 100.6

According to the Alaska Central Railroad Company's survey, a site near Potter Creek was to be where the track turned north, a major construction camp, and eventually a station along the route. During 1915, after the federal government incorporated the Alaska Northern Railroad (that had bought the Alaska Central), a construction camp was opened near Potter Creek. The track, however, was not laid north from Seward but south from Anchorage. When the Anchorage District was elevated to a division in 1915, the region was subdivided into four districts, one, the Turnagain Arm District. Potter Station was the first district headquarters. In December, 1917, construction crews were moved to a new camp at Falls Creek. The district headquarters were also transferred to the new site. Potter was designated a section, and operated as a flag stop until the 1950's. The section house standing at the site was built in 1929. Possibly, the surrounding structures predate that time. No remains of the construction camp warehouse or depot, the main structures, remain. The site is leased by the Alyeska Service Company to service a natural gas pipeline nearby.

ANC-111 Cellar Depression

Location: North of highway right-of-way at Seward Highway
Mile 115.

This is a deep rectangular depression measuring 2.7 meters by 4.0 meters and aligned north-south. A smaller circular depres-

sion, 1.5 meters in diameter is situated near the north end of the larger pit. The features probably represent cellar remains of a historic house associated with railroad activities at Potter Station.

ANC-102 Telegraph Trail (Fig. 3) TURNAGAIN ARM TRAIL

Location: The trail runs between Potter Creek Road and McHugh Creek Wayside, about 3/4's of a mile north of Seward Highway Mile 115.2 to Mile 111.8.

A note in The Alaska Railroad Record during May, 1917, stated that a permanent telephone-telegraph line and trail had been constructed from Anchorage to Sheep Creek (Alaska Railroad Mile 98). If the trail extended beyond this point or merged with another trail is unknown. The trail is still open, although the sides are overgrown, and recently was marked with blue ties. Alders along the section of the trail between Sheep Creek and McHugh Creek had to be cut from the trail-- possibly this section does not follow the original route.

ANC-101 Telegraph Station Site (Fig. 4)

Location: The site is about 2/3's of the distance from Potter Creek Road to McHugh Creek Wayside along the Telegraph Trail (ANC-102). The remains, approximately 100 feet west of Sheep Creek, are 50 feet south off the trail.

Communication between the Alaska Railroad headquarters at Anchorage with the Turnagain Arm district was vital while the railroad was under construction. Between 1915 and 1917 the railroad brought passengers and freight from the port at Seward to Kern Creek where they were transported to Anchorage by boat, sled, or wagon. The high winds through the Arm area frequently caused breaks in the telegraph line, and prompt repair was facilitated by maintaining the waystation. At the site half a 12 by 18-foot log structure remains. The roof has collapsed, but the logs and window frame are in place. A dirt foundation, 12 by 16 feet, is discernible about twelve feet west of the cabin. Copper wire is all around the area. Although there is evidence that the site has been heavily disturbed, further investigation is recommended.

ANC-110 Sheep Creek Cabins

Location: Approximately 100 yards upstream from the mouth of Sheep Creek and approximately 1/4 miles down stream from ANC-101.

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The remains of two log cabins and a garbage dump are situated adjacent to the creek on its north side and approximately 20

yards apart. Both measure about 12 feet by 13 feet and are heavily damaged by stream erosion. The garbage dump is situated adjacent to the uppermost cabin. It is about 20 feet in diameter and consists mainly of rusting tin cans and broken glass bottles. The cabins and dump are possibly related to the telegraph station site (ANC-101).

ANC-109 McHugh Creek Cabin (Fig. 5)

Location: The site is in a narrow valley about 400 feet west of McHugh Creek State Wayside, and about 200 feet north of Mile 111.8 Seward Highway.

A collapsed cabin about 9 feet square is at the site. Remains of what appears to be a log platform are about 25 feet south of the cabin. Probably the site is related to the telegraph line that the federal government constructed to facilitate communication in the Turnagain Arm District while the railroad was under construction, and later between the Seward dock and railroad headquarters in Anchorage.

ANC-100 McHugh Creek Railroad Construction Camp (Fig. 6)

Location: At McHugh Creek Wayside, in Chugach State Park, north from Mile 11.8 of the Seward Highway Mile 96 of the Alaska Railroad. The original railroad track ran where the present highway is.

Constructed during 1916, the McHugh Creek camp operated for two years. The Alaska Railroad Record notes that a hospital surgeon was assigned to the Turnagain Arm District, and several oral accounts note that a hospital operated at this camp. A number of institutional-sized rusting cans, about 1/5 of a mile north of the upper parking area, remain. The dump site has been heavily vandalized. Between the two parking areas some faint dirt foundations can be discerned. Associating these with Alaska Engineering Commission photographs of the camp, they might be the upper tent sites. If so, the bulk of the former camp was where the paved parking area is now.

ANC-095 McHugh Creek Cabin Site

Location: About 3/4's of a mile north from the footbridge that crosses McHugh Creek at the State Wayside, Mile 111.8 of the Seward Highway. The remains are scattered 15 feet north of a trail that heads north and generally parallels the creek.

The remains of a frame building, oil barrels and furniture are scattered on a hill south of, but above McHugh Creek. Local

residents have related that a number of people built cabins north of the McHugh Creek camp along the creek. The site is along a trail where, in many places, overgrown roadbeds are visible.

ANC-093 Cement Pilings (Fig. 7)

Location: The remains are about a mile north of McHugh Creek Wayside, along the north side of the creek. The east end of the site is bordered by steep bedrock.

At the site are six cement pilings each with metal rods and pipes imbedded. Each piling is 1 1/2 feet square and about 3 feet high. Rusting furniture, such as a mattress frame, and garbage are around the site. A dirt foundation, 8 by 10 feet borders the pilings. A trail that runs along the creeks from McHugh Creek Wayside abruptly ends at the site. The area has been vandalized.

ANC-103 Log Cabin (Fig. 8)

Location: About 1/2 mile north of Beluga Point and Mile 110 of the Seward Highway.

Although in a decomposed state, 4 logs along the southeast and southwest walls remain. A window frame at ground level and a doorway are in the southwest wall. Two logs remain on each of the north walls. About 35 feet northwest of the cabin a path that has been built rather than just cut is evident. The site fits a description in The Alaska Railroad Record of a cabin that was constructed for the Turnagain Arm engineers.

ANC-105 Outhouse, Beluga Point

Location: About 500 feet north of Seward Highway Mile 109.5 and 1/4 mile east of ANC-054.

Remains of the collapsed outhouse overlook Turnagain Arm. A search for foundations in every direction was fruitless. However, a clearing between two spruce trees about fifteen feet east of the outhouse might have been a tent site. Perhaps the site was connected with the telegraph line, as wire, an insulator, and pole were found nearby. A "road" leads up from the highway in the direction of the site.

ANC-104 Cabin Foundations

Location: The foundations are clustered on the east side of a gravel road that leads north from Mile 109.2 of the Seward Highway, just east of Beluga Point.

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Varying in size from 18 feet square to 2 by 3 feet, six foundations are visible in a cluster along the side of a hill overlooking the highway. A couple of logs are intact on the three largest foundations, and one floor is covered with heavy plastic. Also, railroad ties are scattered in the area. Because of the site's location, it might have been associated with the telegraph. Although the site has been heavily disturbed, further investigation might be worthwhile.

ANC-106 Beluga Point Cabin Site

Location: About 1/2 mile north of Beluga Point off Mile 109.4 of the Seward Highway, on the south side of a small creek.

The two dirt foundations, surrounded by a network of indistinct paths are adjacent to a small creek and Turnagain Trail. The main dirt foundation is 15 feet square, and has a log intact. Another foundation, 12 feet west and across a path, is dirt.

ANC-107 Turnagain Trail

Location: Reportedly, the trail runs from Portage to Knik, parallel with Turnagain Arm. Across the creek from ANC-106 and about 3/4's of a mile north from Seward Highway Mile 109.4, the cut of the trail is visible.

During the early 1900's a trail paralleling the north side of Turnagain Arm was an alternate route connecting Seward with Knik. Several oral accounts have called the route by other names. One name, the Great Northern Trail, would indicate the route was cut at a later date than generally believed, by railroad survey crews. The main trails through the region, over Crow Pass and along Indian Creek, are more distinct than this route. A cut, however, is apparent in places. North of Beluga Point several large trees intertwine, and appear to be a trail marking. Part of the Chugach State Park, the trail is being marked and recut. If portions of the trail are destroyed by the highway project, a trail as near as possible to the original should be recut, and markers explaining this erected.

ANC-113 Rainbow Camp (Fig. 9)

Location: About 1/2 mile north of the Seward Highway, Mile 102, Alaska Railroad Mile 94.

A picnic table and a foundation in a large clearing remain at the former railroad camp site. Prior to the Alaska Railroad the Alaska Central Railroad had selected the site for a camp.

In 1918 the Turnagain District headquarters that had first been at Potter moved to Rainbow. A dock and warehouse were built in 1916 and 1917. In 1929 a station house, shed, bunkhouse, and liquor store were at the site--the railroad track was where the highway runs today. The site is bisected by a rough gravel road that leads to private property above the site. Just north of the camp, the faint outline of Turnagain Trail, overgrown with alders, can be discerned. Through this area the trail zig-zags down the hill. Supposedly, the store building at the Indian House complex is a construction crew bunkhouse that was moved from the Rainbow camp during the 1950's.

ANC-112 Sluice Box

Location: Stretching across Rainbow Creek, the sluice box is east of Rainbow Camp Site (SEW-127) and about 1/2 mile north of Mile 102 of the Seward Highway.

The sluice box appears to be of fairly recent construction. It measures approximately 8 by 10 feet and, at present, is above the level of the creek. U.S. Geological Survey reports around the turn of the century include descriptions of mining activity on the north side of Turnagain Arm with mention of Rainbow Creek.

SEW-143 Indian Valley Trail

Location: The nine mile trail heads north from Mile 103.8 of the Seward Highway along Indian Creek, over Indian Pass to Ship Creek.

The Indian Valley Trail was a winter route that connected Seward and Knik. Possibly the route was in use earlier, but is known to have been a dog-sled trail for prospectors heading for the Iditarod gold fields in 1907. Use of the trail dwindled with the completion of the railroad in 1918. Recently the trail was recut and marked by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska.

SEW-126 Indian Station Site

Location: Alaska Railroad Mile 88.7, Seward Highway Mile 103, adjacent to Indian Creek.

In 1918, after construction in the Turnagain Arm section was completed, a section was organized at the site. A new section house was built in 1929, and was a flag stop until the 1950's. No remains of the station can be seen today.

SEW-101 Indian Roadhouse Site (Fig. 10)

Location: The site is approximately 150 feet north of Seward Highway Mile 103, Alaska Railroad Mile 88.6, along the west side of Indian Creek.

Three foundations and one standing cabin stretch north and south along the creek. The remains of bunk beds and a door with "office" painted on reinforce written accounts that a roadhouse was at the site. The two log foundations at the south end measure approximately 18 by 21 feet. The third foundation has a plank floor, and a pipe runs under the width towards the north end. About 25 feet away is the standing cabin; the roof is intact, as are the window and door frames. The roadhouse is known to have operated while the Alaska Railroad was under construction in the region, and possibly opened fifteen years earlier. Reportedly, pilings of an old bridge that led from the railroad to the roadhouse and a sawmill along the creek were visible until the highway was built during the 1950's. Further investigation of the site is strongly recommended.

SEW-132 Indian Sawmill Site

Location: On the east side of Indian Creek, just north of Seward Highway Mile 103, Alaska Railroad Mile 88.6.

The Alaska Engineering Commission opened a sawmill at the site and began logging operations along Indian Creek in 1918. In October the sawmill was destroyed by fire and not replaced. The Alaska Railroad Record indicates that foul play was involved. For a number of years after the railroad was completed in the area, a private sawmill operated at the site providing wood for the railroad. Evidence of extensive logging can be seen along the creek, but no remains of either sawmill exist. A wood bridge had been constructed to connect the railroad and sawmill, and, according to an oral account, pilings were still visible in the mid-1950's.

SEW-113 Falls Creek Cabin (Fig. 11)

Location: Along the east side of Falls Creek, approximately 400 feet north of the Seward Highway off Mile 102.

The log cabin was probably related to the mail trail (Turnagain Trail) connecting Knik and Seward. Although the roof is collapsed, the walls about 4 1/2 feet high, of the 15 by 16 foot cabin are standing. A trail overgrown with alders and poplars is visible approximately thirty feet north of the cabin. The site has been severely vandalized.

SEW-103 Bird Creek Roadhouse

Location: About twelve miles west of Girdwood, along Bird Creek at Seward Highway Mile 101.2.

Located along the routes of three trails that crossed the area, the Bird Creek Roadhouse operated at least by 1911. The stop was open while the Alaska Railroad was under construction in Turnagain Arm, 1915 to 1919. When the stop closed is unknown. There is no evidence at the site.

SEW-125 Bird Point (Figs. 12 and 13)

Location: The site is south of Seward Highway Mile 101.5, Alaska Railroad Mile 81.7.

In 1917 the Alaska Engineering Commission opened a sawmill and a camp at Bird Point that operated until the bridges over the mud flats were constructed. The station was a flag stop after 1918, and operated until the 1950's. The foundation of the section house is still visible. Evidence of a railroad wye headed toward the water can also be seen. Several oral accounts mentioned a mine shaft near the station that had been dug in the late 1800's. The shaft extended 100 feet below the Arm, however it flooded and the project was abandoned.

SEW-133 Snowshed, Alaska Railroad Mile 75.9

SEW-134 Snowshed, Alaska Railroad Mile 76

SEW-135 Snowshed, Alaska Railroad Mile 76.3

SEW-136 Snowshed, Alaska Railroad Mile 76.5

Four snowsheds, each approximately 550 feet long, were built during November, 1919, by the Alaska Engineering Commission. Nearby (a half mile from Mile 76.5) a tent camp with several log buildings was established in the late 1930's to facilitate construction to alter the route through the area. At that time, the snowsheds were eliminated.

SEW-016 Girdwood

Location: The community is 35 miles south of Anchorage, Mile 90.3 of the Seward Highway, Mile 74.8 of The Alaska Railroad.

Girdwood was a mining community, founded after gold was discovered along Glacier Creek in 1896. Because it was the largest community between Anchorage and Kern Creek, the site was selected for a major construction camp and railroad station. The camp operated during the 1917-1918 construction season and

a section was organized when the line was completed. The section house at the site today was constructed in 1940 and moved from its original location at Kern Creek in 1956. A gasoline car shed was moved from Bird to the Girdwood station at the same time. At low tide the remains of other railroad structures that fell into Turnagagin Arm during the 1964 earthquake are visible.

SEW-102

Girdwood Roadhouse/Glacier Creek Roadhouse

Location: The roadhouse is located in the Village of Girdwood, 2 miles north off Mile 90.3 of the Seward Highway.

The roadhouse was accessible to travelers taking any of the three trails through the area--along Indian Creek, over Crow Pass, or parallel with the Arm--to Knik. Little is known about the lodge, however, it was in operation by February, 1911. Nothing remains at the site.

SEW-144

Crow Pass Trail

Location: The trail begins in the community of Girdwood off Mile 90.3 of the Seward Highway. It follows an old mining trail that leads to Crow Pass, then along Raven Creek to Eagle River.

The Crow Pass and Indian Valley trails were the first routes connecting the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound with the Interior. Both routes were winter trails, and mail and supplies were regularly hauled across them during the early 1900's. Along the Crow Pass route the ruins of Girdwood Cabins, a mining camp, are visible. At Mile 1.7 the crew's quarters of the Girdwood Mine, a hardrock gold mining operation that flourished from 1906 to 1948, can still be seen. In the cliffs above are the mine shafts. Today, much of the trail is part of Chugach National Forest.

Prehistory

Until this project, only one archaeological survey had been conducted along Turnagain Arm. That survey, by R. Greg Dixon and William F. Johnson under the supervision of Dr. William B. Workman, touched only on the Alaska Division of Parks waysides at McHugh Creek and at Bird Creek. No archaeological remains were noted. Despite these negative findings, interpretations of investigations in the Upper Cook Inlet and tributary areas have suggested a considerable span of human occupation.

This conjecture has, however, not been proven until now. Superficial consideration by most archaeologists in the past led to the attitude that the hostile marine environment precluded use of the Turnagain Arm area. Results of this survey obviously contradict that writing off of an area never before examined.

Anthropological work in the Upper Cook Inlet area which can be extrapolated to at least the outer portions of Turnagain Arm includes an ethnographic reconstruction of Tanaina Athapaskan culture by Osgood (1966), an archaeological survey on the northern Kenai Peninsula by Kent and others (1964), a brief survey of Point Woronzof and testing of one house under the supervision of Dr. Frederick H. West in 1967 (unpublished), the survey of State parks waysides by Dixon and Johnson (1973), excavations reported by Dumond and Mace (1968) near Knik Arm, and archaeological survey between Point Woronzof and Point Campbell by the Division of Parks (Reger, 1975). None of the above cited investigations directly assisted the inventorying of archaeological sites between Potter and Girdwood, however several did result in interpretations which can be indirectly applied to the Turnagain Arm area.

Osgood's reconstruction of aboriginal and historic culture and territory of the Tanaina Athapaskans relegated the Turnagain Arm area to that group not so much from positive evidence but more from lack of evidence to the contrary (1966: 13ff). Excavations on a small house pit near Point Woronzof in 1967 under the supervision of Dr. Fredrick H. West yield very little which would indicate a definite ethnic identity for the occupants. The impression gained by the senior author was that the site resembled very closely in its situation and lack of remains, other sites from the Kenai Peninsula attributed to a Tanaina occupation.

Excavations reported by Dumond and Mace (1968) in the Knik Arm area were interpreted by the authors as being primarily Eskimoid in nature. Based on that interpretation, they hypothesized that the Tanaina had not occupied the Knik Arm area until A.D. 1650 at the earliest, but did so before A.D. 1780 (Dumond and Mace, 1968: 19). This hypothesis would logically apply to the Turnagain Arm area as the two areas are contiguous. Evidence obtained through the Potter to Girdwood Survey appears to refute that interpretation as will be seen in the discussion section.

Four archaeological sites were found along the project route. All yielded entirely lithic collections except one which yielded faunal remains but not destructible artifacts. All were found on rocky eminences and all had been previously disturbed either by construction activities, vandalism or both.

ANC-54 (Figs. 15 and 16, Map 2)

Location: Seward Highway Mile 110.3

This site is located on a rocky point between the Seward Highway and Turnagain Arm, known locally as Beluga Point. The

site limits closest to the Seward Highway are 45 meters (150 feet) from the present highway surface and 30 meters (100 feet) from the centerline of the Alaska Railroad tracks. The site is therefore outside of both highway and railroad right-of-ways and in Chugach State Park. The site covers approximately 500 meters, measuring 100 meters by 50 meters with the long axis parallel to the highway. Depth of the site from ground surface to bedrock ranges from 2.5 meters to .5 meter.

Beluga Point is partially vegetated with aspen, spruce, and alder providing tree cover over half of the site and grass, berry bushes or rose bushes covering the remainder. Grassy areas are apparently the result of recent disturbance.

A bulldozer cut divides the site into two areas. Most of the cultural material thus far recovered has come from the northwestern part. The southeastern portion contains the deepest deposits but remains largely unexplored. Portions of the site are being eroded by the ocean and by vandalism.

The Beluga Point Site is undoubtedly the most important archaeological site known at this time in the Upper Cook Inlet area. Three cultural components appear to range in age from approximately 6,500 years ago to within the last thousand years. Charcoal samples have been submitted which will date a hearth in the most recent component and a date prior to the oldest component.

ANC-55

(Map 2)

Location: Seward Highway Mile 110.2

The site is located on a treeless knob of bedrock located 180 meters (600 feet) southeast of the Beluga Point Site. A very small test hole dug in a bedrock depression yielded a retouched flake from the shallow soil at a depth of 5-10 cm. Size of the site is unknown but it can be no more than 225 square meters and is probably more on the order of 25 square meters. At any rate the site can be no larger than the top of the rock knob. It lies well outside of the highway right-of-way measuring over 1,200 meters from centerline and thus should not be endangered by the proposed project.

ANC-78

Location: Seward Highway Mile 112.3

This small site is located 60 meters from the highway centerline and 30 meters from the railroad centerline. Thus, it

would be located within both the highway and railroad right-of-ways. Artifacts of chipped stone were found on an isolated rock in an area approximately 3 by 6 meters and at a depth of 40 centimeters. Much of the site has been destroyed by construction of the railroad and by wave erosion. The dominant erosional force now active is wave action during extremely high tides coupled with storm winds.

SEW-131 (Fig. 14, Map 3)

Location: Seward Highway Mile 106.8

Flakes of chert are scattered over an area of approximately 25 square meters at this site. It is located near the base of a telecommunications tower on a high rock bluff overlooking the Seward Highway and Turnagain Arm. The flakes are mostly on the surface but some are buried in very shallow (5 cm deep) soil in bedrock depressions. The site has been extensively disturbed by construction of the tower. A previously used tower lies on part of the site. The little vegetation present consists of a thin alpine tundra mat.

Discussion

The artifact collections from ANC-54, the Beluga Point Site, have thus far come from three distinct stratigraphic units in the northwestern portion of the site. Component I, the lowest and oldest component, consists of core fragments, rejuvenation debris, and blades or blade-like flakes struck from the cores. No cores have yet been found. The core and blade material from this component seems to correspond to similar material from the Long Lake Site in the upper Matanuska River Valley. That material was described in part by Bacon (1975) and a date published by West (1975) of 4656±115 B.C. A small sample size from Component I at Beluga Point makes all but a very tentative correlation meaningless.

Component II material is very difficult to compare with other collections in Alaska. All artifacts from this component are chipped and of forms hitherto unknown from Cook Inlet. One stemmed point and two bases of presumably similar points, two rounded base, lanceolate, points or knives, a number of relatively well made but broken bifaces, and a flake burin comprise the diagnostic assemblage from Component II. The stemmed points may correspond to stemmed points of similar appearance from Level II of the Healy Lake Village Site. No good correspondences can be seen in the published literature for any other Alaskan area. The rounded base, lanceolate points or knives are similar to specimens found almost anywhere in the state. They also last for a considerable span of time. The burin cannot be compared with any of the formal classes of burins described for Alaskan collections.

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The only diagnostic artifact recovered from Component III is a ground slate point which compares with many such points found in Kachemak Bay and the remainder of the Pacific Eskimo area (de Laguna, 1975). This point, of late Kachemak Tradition appearance, probably dates sometime within the last 1,000 years. Several mountain sheep bones and a fire hearth were found in the same stratigraphic context as the ground slate point. The hearth consisted of a stone ring filled with beach gravel, charcoal and burned bone.

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In another portion of the site, a bone bed occurred under a stratigraphic unit interpreted to be over-burden resulting from use of the area as a materials source during railroad or highway construction. The bones contained in the bed have been tentatively identified as mountain sheep bones.

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Only one semi-diagnostic artifact has been recovered from ANC-078 near McHugh Creek. This is a medial section of a point or knife with both base and tip missing. It could be compared with any number of projectile points or knives of almost any time period; however there is a suggestion in its outline of a shoulder midway along the side. The remainder of the collection from ANC-078 consists of an additional, almost unrecognizable, biface fragment and waste flakes. No diagnostic artifacts have been found at ANC-55 or SEW-131.

Recommendations

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Most of the cultural resources found or reported along Turnagain Arm are outside the existing Seward Highway right-of-way. Only one site, SEW-131, and portions of the Turnagain Trail are within the right-of-way. One additional site, ANC-78, could be secondarily affected by widening of the highway. This would be if a movement of the railroad tracks is required.

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SEW-131 is on a rock bluff on the inside of a rather sharp curve at Mile 106.8. If blasting of that bluff constitutes part of the proposed action, the site will be destroyed. Little of the site remains, but what is there would be important. We suggest that salvage of the site in the event of impact is a proper mitigating procedure. The small area extent and shallow deposit dictate a fairly limited salvage effort would be needed.

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Staff of the Department of Highways have indicated the need to blast existing portions of the Turnagain Trail at Mile 106. This action, if followed by replacement construction, would not affect the historic significance of the trail.

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The Beluga Point Site, ANC-54, appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It fulfills the criteria of having yielded, and is "likely to yield information important in pre-history" of the region. This site is the most important found to date for establishing the prehistoric framework in Upper Cook Inlet. No formal determination of eligibility has been made as yet.

Even if determined to be eligible, the proposed widening and straightening of the Seward Highway should not affect the site.

No properties determined to be eligible for listing or listed on the National Register of Historic Places appear to be affected by this project.

A hanging deltaic deposit across the Seward Highway from ANC-78 (see map 3) is important to interpretation of past environmental conditions. The State Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys has indicated a study of that deposit is planned for the summer of 1977. Any alteration or quarrying of the gravel should be postponed until such a study is accomplished.

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October 1976



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Potter Station, ANC-075

AEC Photo



Potter Station, ANC-075

AEC Photo



3

Telegraph Trail, ANC-102

ADP Photo



Telegraph Station Site, ANC-101

ADP Photo



5

McHugh Creek Cabin, ANC-109

ADP Photo



McHugh Creek Railroad Construction Camp, ANC-100

ADP Photo



7

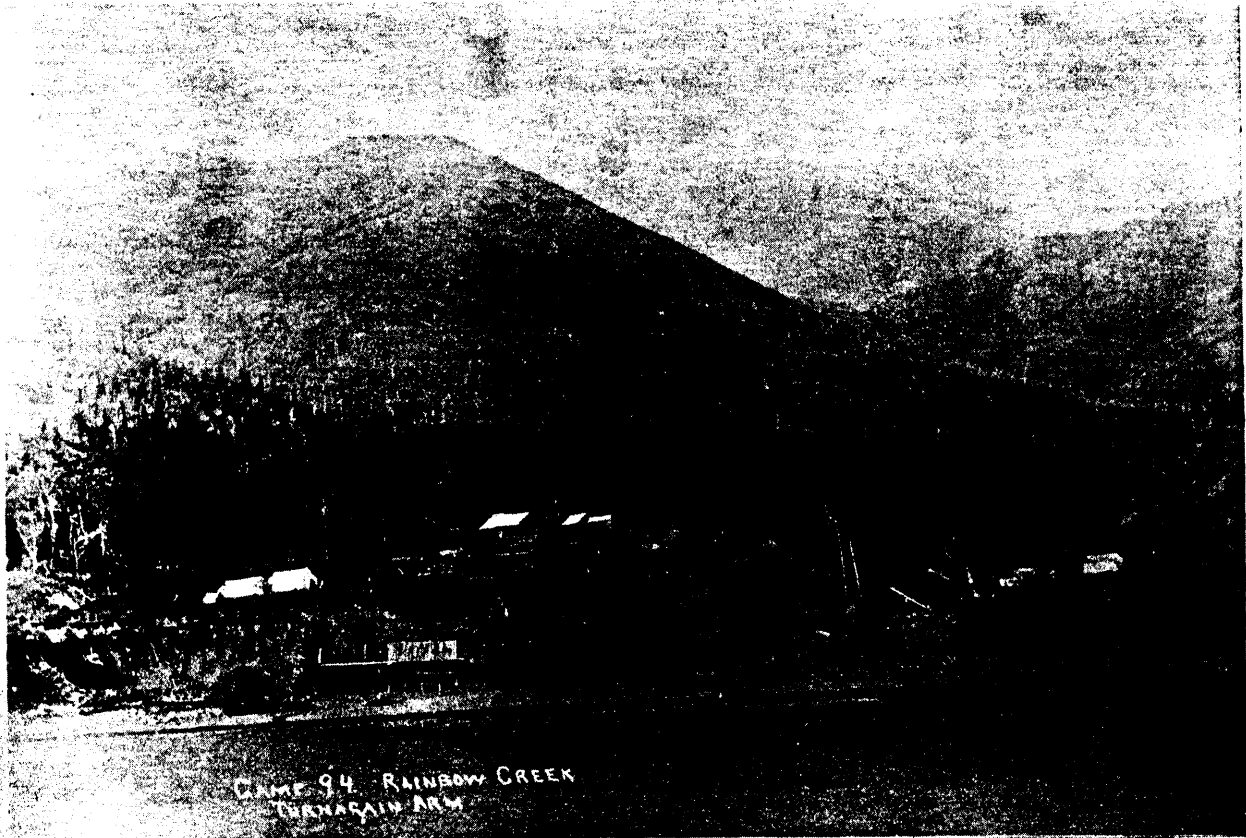
Cement Pilings, ANC-093

ADP Photo



Log Cabin, ANC-103

ADP Photo



CAMP 94. RAINBOW CREEK
CHEROKEE ARMY

Fig. 9

Rainbow Camp, ANC-113

AEC Photo



Indian Roadhouse Site, SEW-101

ADP Photo

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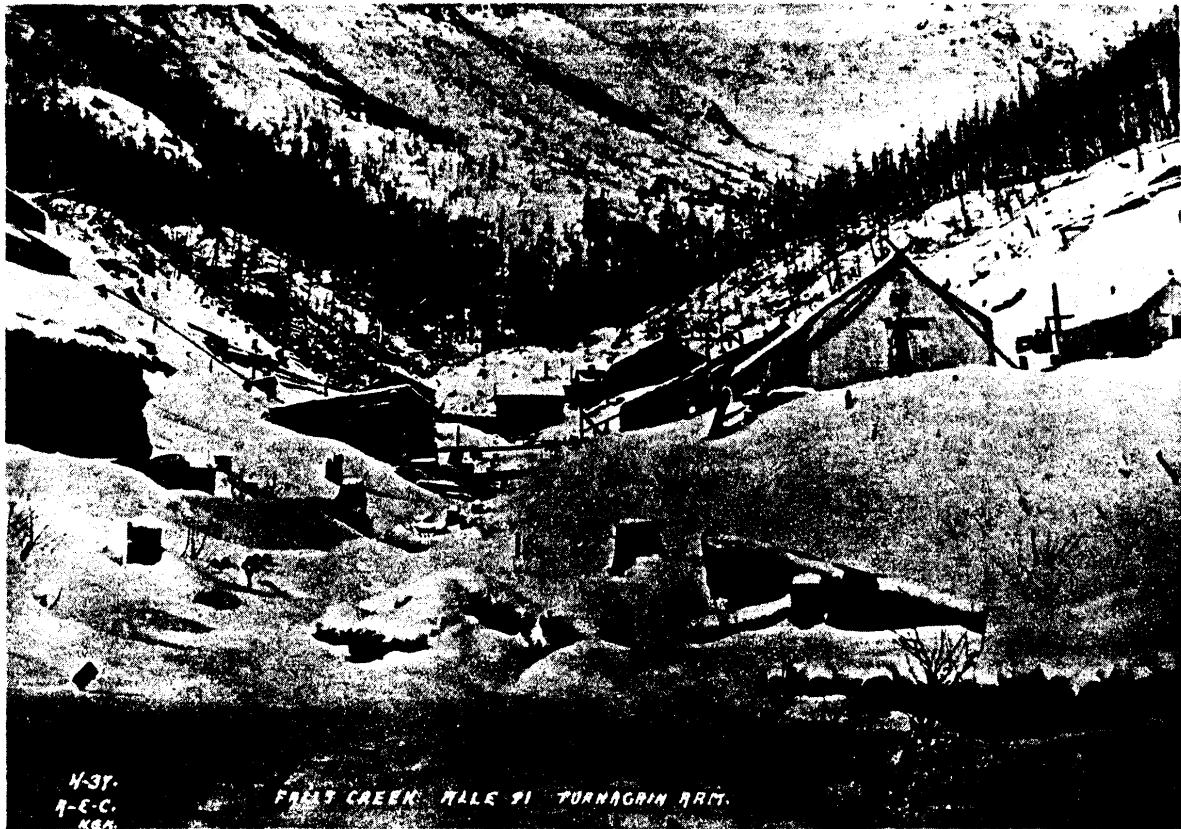


Fig. 11

Falls Creek Railroad Construction Camp, SEW-113

AEC Photo



Fig. 12

Bird Point, SEW-125



Fig. 13

Bird Point, SEW-125

AEC Photo



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SEW-131 Locality

ADP Photo



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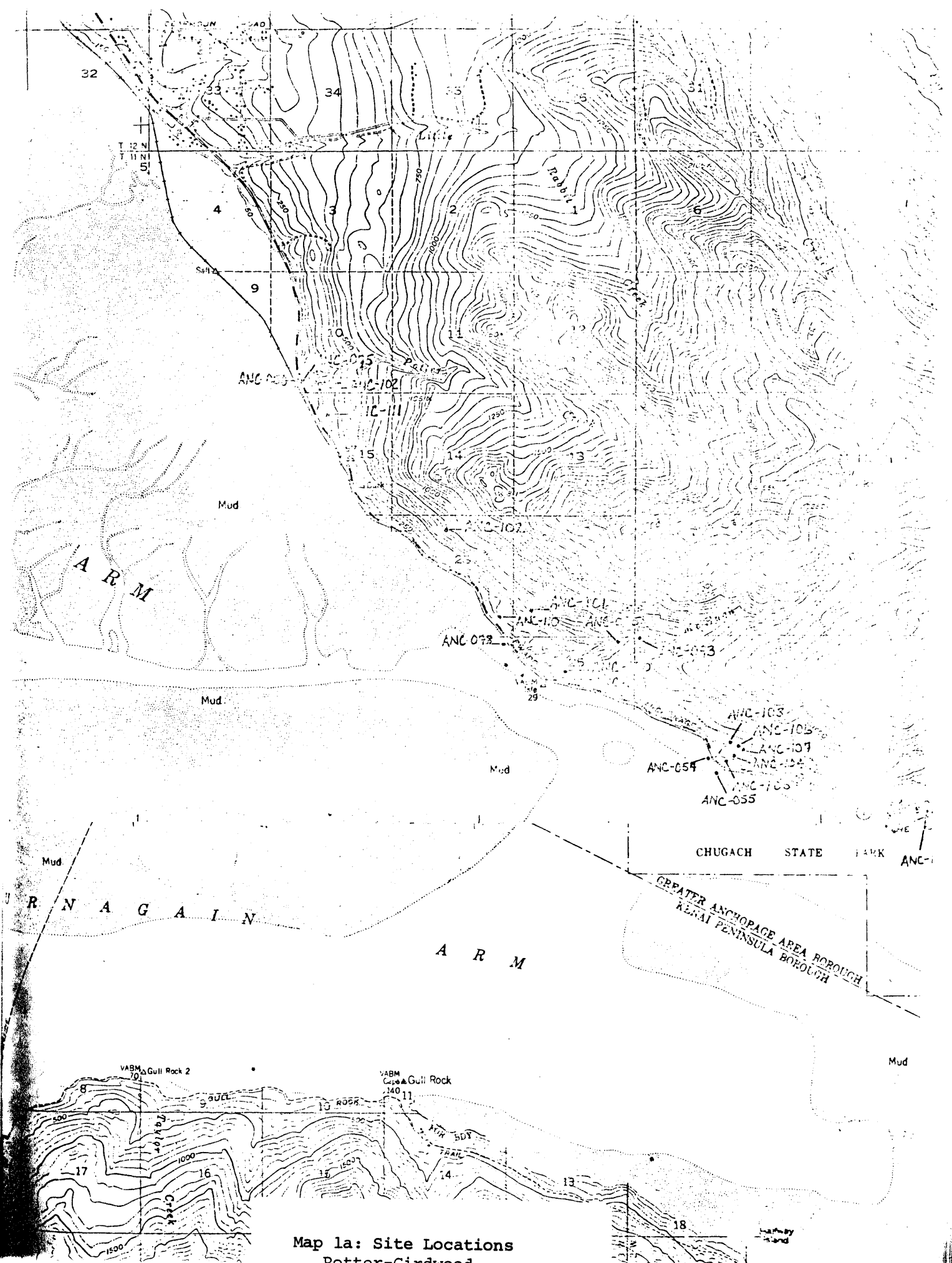
Beluga Point Site, ANC-054

ADP Photo

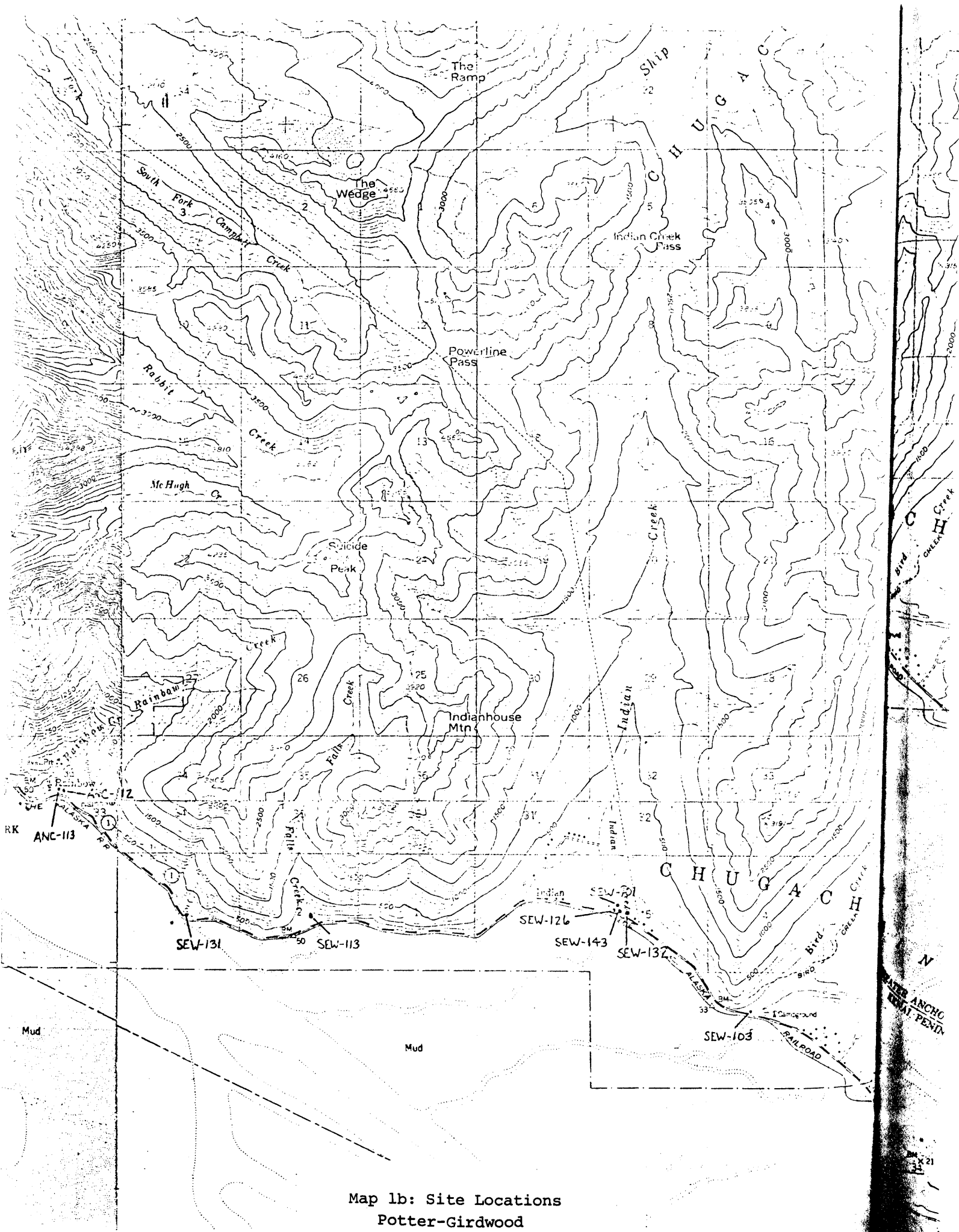


Beluga Point Site, ANC-054

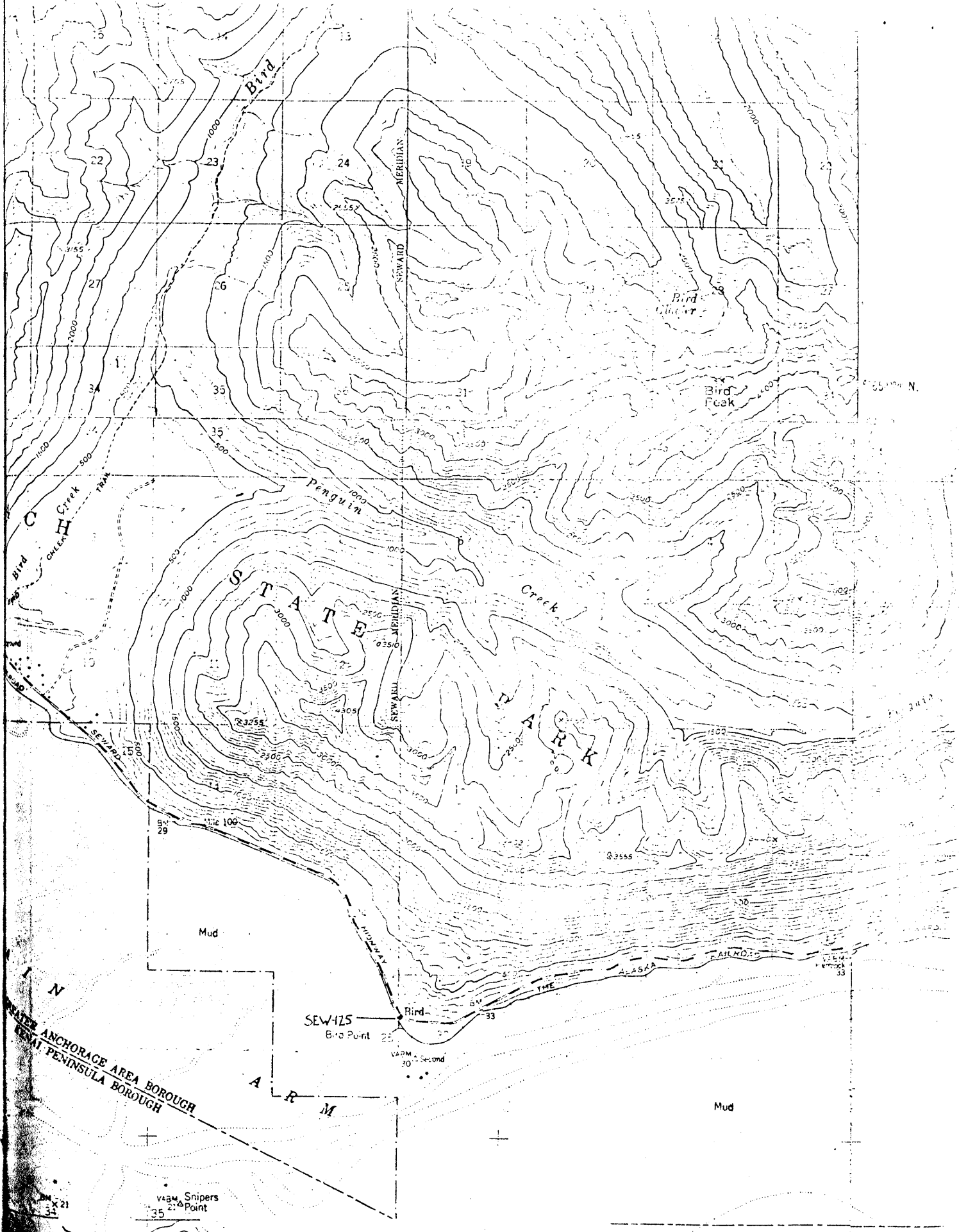
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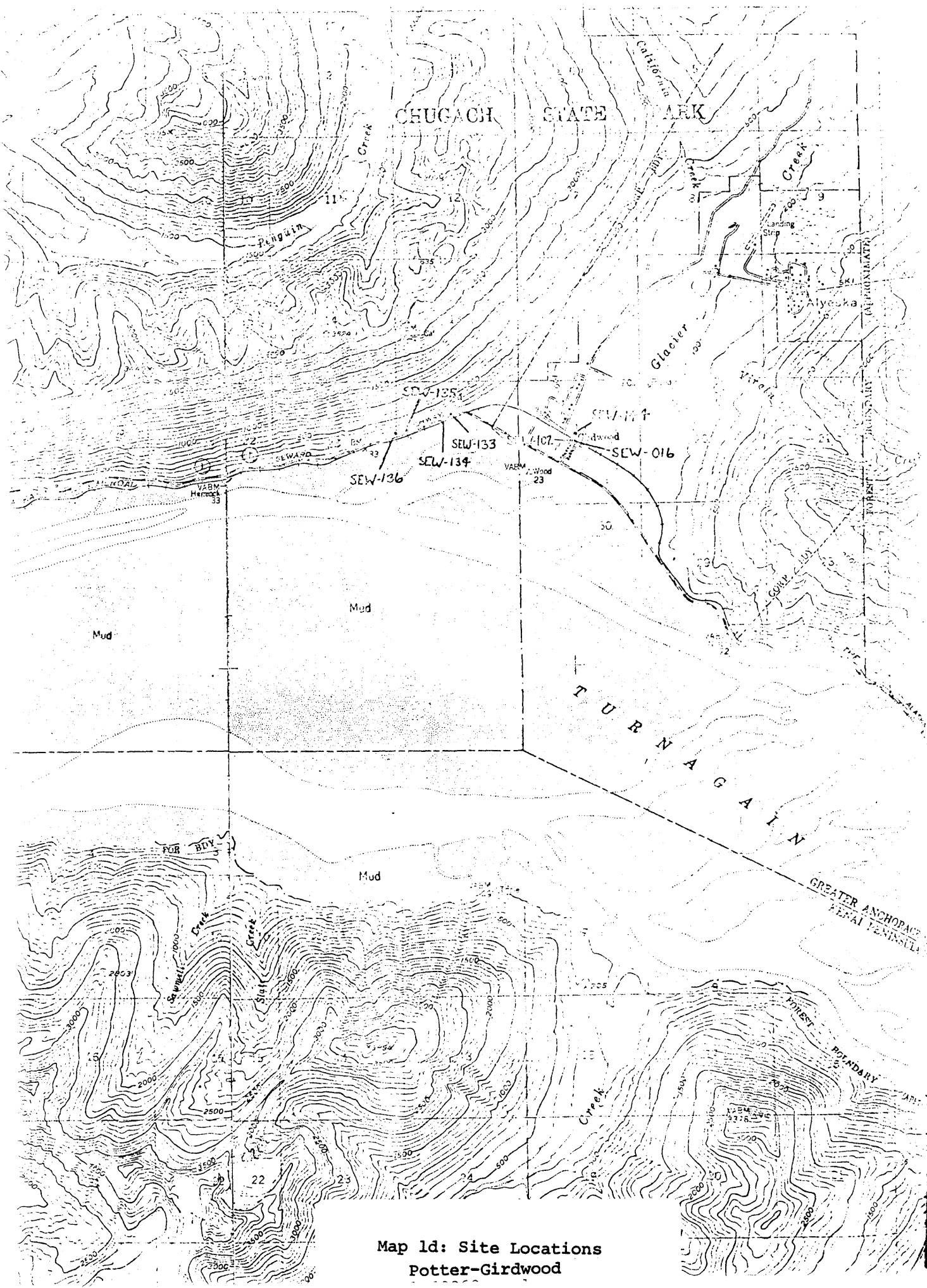
Map 1a: Site Locations
Potter-Girdwood



Map 1b: Site Locations
Potter-Girdwood



Map 1c: Site Locations
Potter-Girdwood



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