

Johnson Pass Military Road
SEW-366

**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
**Cultural Research & Management, Inc.
6444 Tanager Lane
Eden Prairie, Minnesota**

Kurt P. Schweigert, Principal Investigator

Performed under Contract No. 53-0109-9-00273

March, 1991

PHASE I EVALUATION FORM

Kurt Schweigert

March, 1991

1. Name of Property: Johnson Pass Military Road
AHRS Site #: SEW-366

2. Location: T.5N-R.1E, Sections 4, 5, 8.
T.6N-R.1E, Sections 2, 11, 14, 15.
T.7N-R.1E, Sections 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15,
23, 26, 35.
T.8N-R.1E, Section 31.
T.8N-R.1W, Sections 10, 14, 15, 23, 25, 26.
Seward C6, C7, and D7 Quadrangles.

3. Classification:

Ownership: Public-federal

Category of Property: Structure

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing: 1 Structure

Non-Contributing: 0 (this format doesn't quite
work, does it?)

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/Road-related
Transportation/Pedestrian-Related

Current Functions: Recreation and Culture/Outdoor
recreation/Hiking trail.

7. Description:

The Johnson Pass Military Road/Trail ran from Mile 34 of the Alaska Railroad, over Johnson Pass, down Bench Creek and East Fork Creek, down Sixmile Creek to Sunrise, and then to Hope on a route roughly parallel to the coast of Turnagain Arm. Specific location points and segment routes discussed below are shown on the attached portions of pertinent U.S.G.S. topographical quadrangle maps.

The southern end of the road is somewhat obscure because the area is marshy and a number of short alternate routes were probably used within the first half mile of trail. The trail departs from the railroad grade at Point "A" on the attached map, which is about 410 meters west-southwest from a U.S.G.S. benchmark in SE/NE/NE Section 8, T.5N-R.1E. This area is distinguished as a general clearing containing small

spruce and birch and alders. The road extends northeastward from Point "J-1" and is intersected by two foot trails which run more directly southward to the railroad. The road becomes very distinct as it rises onto a bench about 200 meters from the railroad. A small intermittent stream has assumed the wagon road for about 40 meters southeast of the bench, and an iron wagon wheel rim was found just below the bench. At the bench a grade about 3.5 meters wide was cut and filled, and in one area earth and stone were bermed beside the road. A one-gallon lard can with crimped seal was found at Point "A".

The road is very distinct between the bench near the railroad and Johnson Lake. The road is up to 4 meters wide, well rutted in many locations, and cuts, fills, and berms are evident in many areas. At Point "B" the current Forest Service recreational trail from Moose Pass joins the old road from the northwest, and from this point to Johnson Lake the current trail generally follows the old road. About 38 meters northeast of Point "B" is a recently constructed stringer type wooden pedestrian bridge across a small stream. The bridge is in good repair and appears to be less than ten years old.

At Point "C" the current recreational trail departs to the west of the old wagon road, and the wagon road continues a curving path to the northeast. At Point "D" the old road runs between remains of two substantial log structures, apparently a cabin and a barn associated with trail (recorded as a distinct site, field code CRM327-4). The cabin has up to six tiers of logs remaining, and the apparent barn has up to four tiers remaining. The condition of the structures and the cans and other artifacts observed on the site recommend that it dates from the period of active use of the trail, ca. 1905-1920.

At Point "E" the current recreational trail rejoins the old wagon road. In the mile to the northeast of Point "E" are several areas where ditches have been dug beside the road to aid drainage, and the walls of these ditches are sharp enough to indicate relatively recent construction (less than ten years). The Forest Service has also installed a number of aluminum culverts under the road, and the roadbed has been built up in a number of locations at an unknown time. Corduroy is evident at Point "F" and several other locations; the corduroy is small poles laid across the roadbed in boggy areas. The age of the corduroy is unknown; some appears to have been placed within the past year but in other

areas the poles are rotted and may have been placed many years ago.

At Point "G" the road enters heavy alder and grass growth, and from this point northward to Johnson Lake the roadway is often encroached by vegetation but is evident in cuts and fills in scattered locations. Two small stringer type pedestrian bridges cross streams between Point "G" and Johnson Lake; these structures appear to have been built after 1950.

The wagon road passes around the east side of Johnson Lake, northward over the low summit into the Bench Creek/Turnagain Arm drainage, and along the east side of Bench Lake. Dense vegetation encroaches on the road throughout this area, but the current recreational trail appears to follow the roadway to Point "H", which is the easternmost extent of Bench Lake. At this point, the old wagon road departs in a generally north-northeasterly direction from the current trail. The wagon road is very indistinct here because of dense alder growth and flood erosion of small seasonal streams. The road is more easily found at Point "I", where it rejoins the current recreational trail. Between Points "H" and "I" the wagon road is defined by a line of extremely dense alders and by several cuts and small fills along the slopes to the east of the current trail; this segment is also clearly visible on aerial photographs.

The current trail follows the "pack trail" shown on the 1951 topographic map for about one-fourth mile northwestward from Point "H", but the current trail diverges from the old pack trail route and remains on the east side of Bench Creek until it rejoins the old road at Point "I". About 200 meters south of Ohio Creek is a marker with inscription "In memory of Paul Kenneth Anderson who gave his life in the completion of this project, July 25, 1968." Anderson was killed while setting explosives during construction of the current trail and bridge system.

The old "pack trail" shown on the quadrangle map was not observed at any point, possibly because the route of the pack trail at the base of steep mountain slopes is subject to frequent avalanches and dense alder growth.

The improved wagon road is not in evidence between Points "I" and "J". In this area the current trail is hemmed closely by sheer cliffs and the creek in places, and the current trail seems to be too steep and narrow

in places to have supported wagon traffic. Vegetation here is dense alders, tall grass, wild celery, Devil's club, and raspberries. Attempts to locate the road were fruitless, and it is possible that the roadway through this area has been destroyed by erosion or that it crossed Bench Creek near Point "I" and continued along the "pack trail" route shown on the quadrangle map to Point "K". However, evidence of such a crossing near Point "I" or of a road on the west side of Bench Creek in this area were not observed.

Northward from Point "J" the current trail again follows a wide roadbed with constructed grades and cuts, which is assumed to be the old wagon road. The wagon road and current recreational trail cross to the west side of Bench Creek at a relatively recent timber pedestrian bridge at Point "K". Remains of at least one earlier bridge were observed at the creek crossing.

The wagon road is very distinct between the Bench Creek bridge and Groundhog Creek, and for much of this distance the road is cut into the east-facing mountain slope. The current recreational trail follows the old road in this segment. The Seward C-6 Quadrangle map (1951/1980) indicates the "pack trail" along the eastern side of the Bench Creek drainage joins the current recreational trail and the old wagon road about 100 meters northeast of the Bench Creek bridge, but evidence of this intersection was not found.

The road is cut into rock cliffs at Groundhog Creek, and the crossing of that steep stream gorge is at a relatively recent timber pedestrian bridge. The road cuts here are dramatic despite the obvious erosion which has occurred since the wagon road was maintained.

Bureau of Land Management Iditarod Trail maps indicate that "Gleasons Camp 1910 Mining Camp" existed at a location from 100 to 200 meters northeast of the Groundhog Creek bridge. This area was examined closely, but definite remains of a mining camp were not found. The area between the road and the Bench Creek gorge is densely vegetated with grass, alder, and spruce. A depression about 15 meters in diameter and up to 2 meters deep was found about 200 meters from Groundhog Creek and immediately to the east of the road. An earthen berm on the south end of the depression and a possible drainage ditch to the north and northeast of the depression were observed, but no structural remains or artifacts were found.

The current trail follows a well defined wagon road from Groundhog Creek northward to Point "L", where the current recreational trail departs to the northeast of the wagon road. Point "L" is about 300 meters south a pedestrian bridge over Bench Creek on the current recreational trail. At Point "L" the wagon road is heavily overgrown with alders, spruce, and grass, but is discernible as cut down grade areas with faint wagon ruts. The road becomes very distinct as it rises on the mountain slope to the northwest of Point "L", and it remains distinct to Lynx Creek. In this area the roadway is 3-5 meters wide and has very distinct cuts and grade fills. Many areas contain wagon ruts up to 15cm deep, and one or both sides of the ruts are often eroded further. Portions of the road have recently been graded with a bulldozer within one mile southeast of Lynx Creek. About a half mile southeast from Lynx Creek is a large tailings pile from a relatively recent mining operation, and postings of mining claim corners were observed.

The old wagon road diverges from a more recent trail shown on the quadrangle map at Point "M", and the old road extends nearly directly northwest to Lynx Creek. The road goes through the White's Roadhouse site (SEW-105) on the east side of Lynx Creek and immediately in front of the oldest structures on the site. On the east side of the White's Roadhouse site a road exits to the north, fords the extreme lower ends of Bench and Center creeks, and continues to the north (the courses of the creeks appear to have changed locations since the quadrangle map was drawn in 1950). The deep rutting of this road indicates it may be of considerable age; this road appears to be the lower end of the Granite/Ingram Creek Trail and has been used for automobile traffic for some time.

White's Roadhouse site (SEW-105) is at least seasonally occupied as headquarters for a mining enterprise. The site contains eight structures, two of which are log structures of considerable age, possibly original structures of the ca. 1905-1920 period. This site is indicated on attached quadrangle coverage of the Johnson Pass Military Road, but the site and its features are recorded as a separate cultural resource designation.

The old wagon road generally follows the trail and road indicated on the Seward C-7 Quadrangle map from Lynx Creek northwestward to the Seward Highway in NW/SW Section 31, T.8N-R.1E. The road is obliterated in the immediate vicinity of Lynx Creek, where the creek

benches have been placer mined. From the mined creek area to Point "N" the road is very distinct as a graded roadbed with hard-packed two-track trace rutted in 5-10cm. The road is indistinct in many locations between Points "N" and "O" because streams have assumed and eroded the roadbed and alders have grown to virtually impassable density along and within the roadbed. In some areas the extreme density of alders itself defines the roadway, particularly when viewed from a distance above or below the road. Near Point "N" the roadbed in a boggy area is defined by a linear stand of spruce trees 5-10cm in diameter, which occupy the raised roadbed in difference to alders in the adjacent bog.

The road has been eroded into Sixmile Creek for a distance of about 50 meters at Point "O". At Point "P" the old road is joined by a recent road entering from the southeast, which eventually ends at the Seward Highway. Vehicle access to the old wagon road is blocked at Point "P" with a pile of rock and earth pushed up with a dozer. The wagon road coincides with a modern mining access road for about one-fourth mile between Points "P" and "Q"; at the latter location the mining road turns to the west and ascends Silvertip Creek. The wagon road is very distinct between Point "Q" and the Seward Highway as a deeply-rutted two-track trace on a leveled roadbed. The wagon road meets the Seward Highway about 53 meters southeast of a U.S.G.S. benchmark on the east end of the highway bridge across Silvertip Creek (benchmark is not shown on C-7 Quadrangle map).

The wagon road is apparent again on the north side of the Seward Highway at a point 100 degrees and 20 meters from the benchmark. The old roadbed extends about 65 meters to Silvertip Creek, where bridge remains were not observed. The roadbed between the highway and Silvertip Creek is very distinct because it was cut into a rock slope. The roadway contains spruce trees up to 20cm diameter, and wagon wheel ruts are not deeply abraded on the generally hard rock roadway east of the creek.

The wagon road resumes on the west side of Silvertip Creek, where it is well rutted and distinguished by a linear stand of spruce trees 5-15cm in diameter. From Silvertip Creek, the old road generally runs parallel and 25-50 meters to the northeast of the current highway for about 250 meters, where the old wagon road turns to the northwest and rejoins the Seward Highway at Point "S". Point "S" is roughly 500 meters northwest of the Silvertip Creek bridge.

The wagon road appears to coincide with the route of the current Seward Highway between Point "S" in SE/NE Section 36, T.8N-R.1W and Point "T" in the vicinity of Canyon Creek in SE/SE Section 15, T.8N-R.1W. The topography of this area offers little opportunity for alternate routes, because the highway runs between steep mountain slopes in many areas to the west and Sixmile Creek to the east. Pedestrian transect examinations on each side of the highway yielded no evidence that segments of the older road might exist in this area.

A segment of old road departs to the northwest from the Seward Highway about 500 meters east of the highway crossing of Canyon Creek, at Point "T". The old road is very distinct as a wide, curving grade descending to Canyon Creek roughly parallel to the current highway route. The wagon road crossing of the creek was immediately downstream from the current highway bridge, and old log bridge abutments were observed on each side of the creek. The abutments are of unknown age but are identical to abutments shown on a ca. 1908 photograph of the bridge. Wooden pilings about 60 meters downstream from the east side log abutments may be remains of a later bridge. Buzzell and McMahan (1986:81) identified these pilings as remains of a bridge built in 1937 by the Bureau of Public Roads.

The wagon road has been obliterated or obscured for about 130 meters on the west side of Canyon Creek as a result of placer mining and construction of the current highway bridge. The road then becomes evident as a graded and filled route 3-5 meters wide which ascends the slope to a wide bench, where it forks. One fork trends to the west and southwest, ascends the slope, and meets the Hope Highway at Point "U", at the west side of the highway rest area. This fork appears to be part of the wagon road built by the Alaska Road Commission in 1913 along the west side of the Canyon Creek drainage. The switchback grade up the slope is generally consistent in width and berming with other segments of wagon road, but this road segment is in use, has been maintained, and may have been widened in some areas.

The other fork of the wagon road continues to the north until it is obliterated by a gravel pit. The wagon road is again very evident on the north side of the gravel pit, at Point "V". A well-treaded two-track road leads from Point "V" about 1,000 meters northward to a rejoining of the current highway, on a route roughly parallel to the current highway. The road is

down-cut in this area, and wheel ruts are up to 1 meter below general ground surface. The old road rejoins the Hope Highway at Point "W", where Sixmile Creek and the mountain topography converge to define a narrow road corridor.

The wagon road resumes at Point "X", about 200 meters north of Point "W", but the divergence from the current highway route is indefinite and was probably obliterated during placer mining and/or construction of the current highway. This segment departs from a large placer mining area, and a large tailings pile marks the southern end of the segment. The road is heavily overgrown with grass and is crossed by several small streams which have eroded the roadbed. The roadbed is generally below grade, however, and is very distinct. About 400 meters north of Point "X" the road enters an area of extensive beaver activity and becomes indiscernible for about 200 meters. The road is faintly discernible from the northern edge of the beaver swamp to a joining of the current Hope Highway at Point "Y".

The wagon road route appears to coincide with the current Hope Highway from Point "Y" to the Forest boundary at the north edge of Section 22, T.9N-R.1W. The opportunity for road construction is severely limited in this area by topography. Pedestrian survey transects did not yield evidence of trail segments in areas where the old wagon road might have diverged from the current highway.

The portion of the Johnson Pass-Sunrise wagon road between Sunrise and Hope was not within the present scope of investigation, and this segment was examined only cursorily while surveyors traveled the Hope Highway. Topography, available aerial photographs, and maps of the old wagon road/trail recommend that the old road did not diverge much if any from the current highway route between Sunrise and Hope.

8. Statement of Significance:

Significance Level: National/State/Local

Applicable Criteria: A, C.

Areas of Significance: Transportation

Period of Significance: 1898-1912

Significant Dates: 1907-1908

Significant Person:

Architect/Builder:

State significance of property:

Gold discoveries on creeks in the northern Kenai Peninsula in 1894 and 1895 resulted in a rush of about 3,000 prospectors to that area in 1886 and several thousand more in 1898. Prospecting of the northern peninsula resulted in establishment of a number of trails, prominently including trails running from Resurrection Bay and Kachemac Bay northward to the placer gold mining centers near Turnagain Arm. The trails initially provided access between year-round ports and the older settlements on Kenai Peninsula and the towns of Sunrise and Hope, which did not have year-round marine access. The trail system subsequently expanded to serve the isolated mining camps along the creeks and rivers throughout the Kenai Peninsula, and after 1898 the system was extended to gold-producing areas at Nome and the interior of Alaska.

The Johnson Pass Military Road generally followed part of an earlier trail route extending from Sunrise City near the mouth of Sixmile River (Creek), southward ascending Sixmile River, East Fork Creek, and Bench Creek, over a low summit between Bench Lake and Johnson Lake, and descending Johnson Creek to Upper Trail Lake. The trail then continued southward to Kenai Lake and eventually over a pass and southward to Resurrection Bay. The origin of this trail is unknown, but it could have been used by prehistoric/protohistoric Natives and by Russian colonists as a relatively easy route for crossing the Peninsula.

The specific trail of the gold rush period was probably extended slowly from north to south as prospecting expanded in that direction. In the summer of 1897, Jack Morgan found trails from Sunrise southward to Groundhog Creek, a tributary of Bench Creek, but he did not find a trail between Groundhog Creek and Upper Trail Lake (Morgan n.d.:22). Geologist W.C. Mendenhall reported apparently second-hand information about the route in 1898:

Another low pass is reported ... between Trail Creek, which enters near the east end of Lake Kenai, and Bench Creek, one of the branches of the east fork of Sixmile. From the mouth of Bench Creek one can reach the head of Turnagain Arm by way of Granite Creek and Quartz Creek ... or by following down Sixmile Creek, reach Sunrise ... All of these routes are travelled at present by trail and boat in the summer or on snowshoes and with sleds in the winter. ... it is likely that the route by way of Bench and Trail creeks

would prove feasible for a railroad
(Mendenhall 1898:302-303).

By 1900 the trail was in general use for foot traffic in summer and foot and dogsled traffic in winter, and in 1902 winter mail service by dogsled was established between Seward and Sunrise and Hope (Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1977;23-25). In 1906 contract mail carrier Anton Eide built two cabins to shelter mail carriers on the trail (Seward Weekly Gateway 10/20/1906). Use of the trail increased as the Alaska Central Railroad built northward from the new town of Seward from 1902 until the railroad company collapsed in 1904. The reorganized Alaska Northern Railroad had constructed track to Mile 33 in September 1905, where a bridge was under construction over Trail Creek. The Alaska Northern continued construction until 1907, when it, too, went bankrupt. By 1907 the railroad line had been completed to Mile 71 at the mouth of Kern Creek on the north side of Turnagain Arm.

In 1906 Seward businessman Frank Ballaine suggested that the Alaska Road Commission should construct a wagon road from Hope and Sunrise to the point where the Alaska Central Railroad would meet Turnagain Arm. Major Wilse Richardson, chairman of the Alaska Road Commission, promised that a survey would be done, followed by cutting of a trail and eventual construction of a wagon road. The survey for a road along the southern shore of Turnagain Arm was performed by Alaska Central engineer W.H. Reel and long-time Kenai Peninsula miner Jerry Odale in June, 1906. Reel and Odale reported that the shoreline route was not feasible due to snowslide hazard and the amount of heavy rock work that would be necessary to construct a road. They recommended instead that a wagon road be constructed over the existing Johnson Pass trail from Lynx Creek to Mile 34 of the railroad (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/23/1906, 6/30/1906, 8/4/1906). Preliminary planning for construction of the Johnson Pass Military Road was already underway when the results of the survey were reported.

The proposed 40-mile wagon road would include routes already improved to varying degrees by miners. A 9-mile pack trail existed between Hope and Sunrise, and a wide, 16-mile pack trail and sled road had been completed between Sunrise and Lynx Creek. From Lynx Creek to the southern end of the proposed road at Mile 34 of the railroad, about one mile of difficult rock work would be necessary along Bench Creek, and a bridge 40 feet high and 60 feet long would be necessary over

Groundhog Creek. No other large bridges or extensive excavation would be necessary, and the estimated cost for a wagon road on this route was \$13,000.00 (Seward Weekly Gateway 8/4/1906, 4/20/1907). Major Richardson of the Alaska Road Commission described the plan for construction in June, 1907:

Of course the word trail is one of elastic definition. There are several kinds of trails in Alaska from the pack trail to the wagon road, but the Sunrise trail will be as good as most of the government roads in Alaska. It will be wide enough to allow teams to pass. It will have good grades, wet places will be corduroyed and streams will be bridged. Of course we will not blow out big stumps or other obstructions that require expensive work but it will be a good winter trail for sleds and a passable wagon trail in dry weather.

Capt. G.K. Armstrong will direct the work on the trail. At first he will employ about twenty-five men, including the camp outfit. Later this number may be slightly increased, if it is found necessary in order to finish the work before wet weather sets in as a regular program in the fall. The plan is to complete the trail by the middle of September. 16 men were employed in Seattle and will arrive on the Portland. The gang includes a foreman and camp outfit. The remainder will be picked up here. None would have been brought from Seattle had not the commission ascertained that men were scarce here (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/15/1907).

Construction of the road began in June, 1907 at Mile 34 and continued northward. The route largely disregarded what the Seward Weekly Gateway called "the old snake trail" from Mile 34 to Johnson Pass summit, but it closely followed the old trail from the summit to Sunrise. By early October, 1907, a wagon road 12 feet wide had been completed from Mile 34 to Sunrise, including 23 miles of new wagon road to Sixmile River and 8 miles of upgraded road along Sixmile River southward from Sunrise. The new road from Mile 34 to Sunrise was at least 4 miles shorter than the old trail. A new trail was also cut from Sunrise to Hope which was about three miles shorter than the old trail. The Sunrise-Hope road was improved only to pack trail and dogsled standards that year, but was improved to

wagon road standards in 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 10/12/1907; Alaska Road Commission 1907:142, 1908:113, 1909:25).

The Johnson Pass Military Road quickly became the principal route for overland travel from Seward to Sunrise and Hope, and it became a key part of the larger transportation route to new gold regions farther to the north and northwest. An estimated 1,000 persons travelled over the trail during the summer of 1908 (Alaska Road Commission 1908:113). The 1909 annual report of the Alaska Road Commission described the boom in use of the route:

This is the route for people traveling to the Sushitna country in winter and to a great extent in the summer, as steamboats in Cook Inlet are very irregular. There is a winter mail service over this route twice a month during the winter, by dog team. About 150 tons of freight were hauled over the road the past season. This is mostly for local use, as the greater part of the freight for this region is hauled in by steamboats in summer (Alaska Road Commission 1909:25).

The traffic on the new road attracted and promoted a number of businesses. Beginning in 1909, the Alaska Northern Railroad ran a gasoline motor car over the tracks which could be requested by telephone to haul parties between Mile 34 and Seward (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/26/1909). Commercial pack trains had begun operating on the Sunrise to Lynx Creek segment by 1897, and the completion of the road boosted business (Morgan n.d.). A pack train operated between Mile 34 and Sunrise at least as early as June, 1909, and was reported to be doing a "rushing business" in July, 1910 (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/26/1909, 7/9/1910). Also in June, 1909, the Seward Weekly Gateway announced plans for a warehouse at Sunrise Station at Mile 34, but evidence has not been found of actual erection of the building.

In a few days the enterprising firm of Brown & Hawkins will build two warehouses on the line of the Alaska Central, one at Mile 29 and the other at Mile 34. These structures well be used for the storage of merchandise destined for the Sunrise and Moose Pass Mining regions. At a later date the firm may open branch stores at these points, for the

accommodations of the miners operating in the vicinity (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/26/1909).

At least three roadhouses were operated along the Johnson Pass Military Road, all of which appear to have pre-dated the construction of the road. A May, 1906 map of the Alaska Central Railway shows both a roadhouse and a projected station at Mile 34, which was also called Sunrise Station and later Johnson Station (Alaska Central Railway 1906). Sam Gates and his wife operated the roadhouse in the fall of 1908, and a roadhouse was operated here by unknown entrepreneurs in September, 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 10/10/1908, 11/7/1908, 9/25/1909; Grant and Higgins 1909). Sam Gates is also reported to have operated a road house at Lynx Creek in July, 1910 (Seward Weekly Gateway 7/9/1910).

Nathan White is reported to have established a roadhouse at Lynx Creek in 1904, and White's buildings are shown on a 1910 map (Sleem 1910; Iditarod National Historic Trail 1982). White's roadhouse may also have been known as the Center Roadhouse (Barry 173:62). A hotel and eating establishment known as the River Hotel was in operation at the confluence of Canyon and East Fork creeks by 1897, and a roadhouse was reported at that location in 1906 (Morgan n.d.:17; Seward Weekly Gateway 11/3/1906). The closing dates for operation of these roadhouses are not known, and only the Sunrise/Johnson Roadhouse may survive.

Construction of the railroad and the Johnson Pass Military Road allowed miners to move heavy equipment more easily to their claims. As a result of the improvements in transportation and a general maturing of the gold extraction industry in the northern Kenai Peninsula, interest increased in finding and mining the lode sources of the placer gold. Claims had been located on gold-bearing quartz lodes on upper Mills Creek from the late 1890s, but these claims were not substantially developed. John Gilpatrick found gold quartz float on Summit Creek in 1896, and in 1906 he found a major gold quartz lode in the Moose Pass area. Many lode claims had been filed in the Quartz Creek and Canyon Creek drainages by 1908, the most promising of which were on Slate and Summit creeks. The Gilpatrick quartz deposits were found to be part of a large mineralized dike in 1908, and this discovery led to further prospecting for both placer and lode gold in the area between Moose Pass and Summit Lake (Barry 1973:123, 127; Seward Weekly Gateway 6/11/1910).

By the summer of 1909 the Moose Pass Mining District was booming, and a small mining camp alternatively named Johnstown or Gilpatrick, after John Gilpatrick, had been established. A crude trail existed from Mile 29 of the Alaska Northern Railroad, up Moose Creek to Moose Pass, and then westward to Fairman (Jerome) Lake and up Quartz Creek to Summit and Slate Creeks (Grant and Higgins 1909:172). The Alaska Road Commission upgraded about 14.5 miles of this trail, from Mile 29 to Johnstown, to 8-foot wide pack trail/sled road standards in 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 5/8/1909; Alaska Road Commission 1909:26). In 1912 this sled road was continued to Sunrise.

The Moose Pass Military Road was not officially upgraded to wagon road standards until the early 1920s, but the effect of construction was to immediately shift traffic from the Johnson Pass Military Road. By 1909 gold production had waned in the vicinity of Sunrise and Hope, and the distance between the railroad and the Moose Pass Mining District was about half the distance between that district and the old supply point at Sunrise. The military roads were about the same length between the railroad and Sunrise, but the Moose Pass route was more gentle, slightly lower, and more protected during winter storms. The winter dogsled mail runs used the Moose Pass route during poor weather at least as early as 1907, and after 1912 the mail sleds probably primarily used this route between the railroad and Sunrise (Mineral Resources of Alaska 1911:137 (Seward Weekly Gateway 3/2/1907; 4/10/1909).

Use of the Johnson Pass Military Road revived to a degree as a result of a series of lode discoveries on Groundhog Creek in 1910, but that boom lasted only one season. In 1912 the Alaska Road Commission reported that "The travel on this route has become very light with the decline in the production of the placer mines near Sunrise and Hope" (Alaska Road Commission 1912:15). The Commission maintained the wagon road until 1920, when it abandoned the segment from Mile 34 to Lynx Creek (Alaska Road Commission 1920:33). The segment from Lynx Creek to Sixmile Creek was then attached to Route 24, the Moose Pass Military Road, and it was maintained until 1951 when the Seward Highway was constructed. The segments from Sixmile Creek to Sunrise and Hope were largely overlain by the Hope Highway.

The Johnson Pass Military Road is recommended to be eligible under Criteria A and C. The road substantially reflects the efforts of the Alaska Road

in service as public highways until the early 1950s.

The intact portions of the Johnson Pass Military Road represent a type and period of construction important in history. The Alaska Road Commission was established by an act of Congress in January, 1905 to oversee construction of a series of transportation routes throughout Alaska. The Commission constructed three general categories of routes: trails, sled roads, and wagon roads. Trails were a cleared and smoothed surface about 8 feet wide with grades no steeper than 4%. Sled roads were similar to trails but were generally wider and less steep. Wagon roads were graded, drained, and corduroyed or macadamed to allow use in both summer and winter (Naske 1986:134). The original bridges no longer exist and much of the road is overgrown with dense alders, but the levelled and drained roadbeds of the Johnson Pass Military Road continue to represent the wagon road type constructed by the Alaska Road Commission. Abandonment of this road in 1920 helped to preserve it; other Alaska Road Commission wagon roads on the Kenai Peninsula and elsewhere in Alaska have been superseded with modern highways, the construction of which has destroyed the setting and feeling if not the design and construction of the wagon roads. The exceptional preservation of the physical road and the setting recommend the Johnson Pass Military Road to be an excellent example of its type.

The Johnson Pass Military Road does not appear to be directly associated with a person important in history (National Register Criterion B), and it does not appear to have yielded or be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D).

9. Major Bibliographic References:

Alaska Central Railway

1906 Map of Amended Definite Location of the
Center Line of the Alaska Central RY. from
Mile 20.42 to Mile 41.00. Office of the

Chief Engineer, Seward, Alaska, May 10. 1906.

Alaska Road Commission

- 1907, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1920. Annual Reports.
Contained in Secretary of War annual reports
for the respective years. Early reports
under title of Board of Road Commissioners
for Alaska.

Barry, Mary J.

- 1973 A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula.
Alaska Northwest Publishing Company,
Anchorage.

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

- 1977 The Iditarod Trail (Seward-Nome Route) and
Other Alaskan Gold Rush Trails. Bureau of
Outdoor Recreation, Department of the
Interior, Washington, D.C.

Buzzell, Rolfe G. and J. David McMahan

- 1986 Cultural Resources Survey of the Seward
Highway, Milepost 50-65.5, Kenai Peninsula,
Alaska. Office of History and Archaeology
Report Number 2, Division of Parks and
Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Department of
Natural Resources, Anchorage.

Estes, Ed

- 1981 Interview at Moose Pass, Alaska, June 15,
1981. On file at Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage District office, Anchorage, Alaska.

Grant, U.S. and D.F. Higgins

- 1904 Preliminary Report on the Mineral Resources
of the Southern Part of Kenai Peninsula. In
Alfred H. Brooks and others, Mineral
Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of
Investigations in 1909. U.S. Geological
Bulletin 442. U.S. Government Printing
Office, Washington, D.C.

Mendenhall, Walter C.

- 1898 A Reconnaissance from the Resurrection Bay to
the Tanana River, Alaska, in 1898. U.S.
Geological Survey Annual Report 1898-99, Part
VII, Exploration in Alaska in 1898. U.S.
Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Morgan, Albert Weldon "Jack"

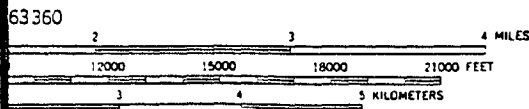
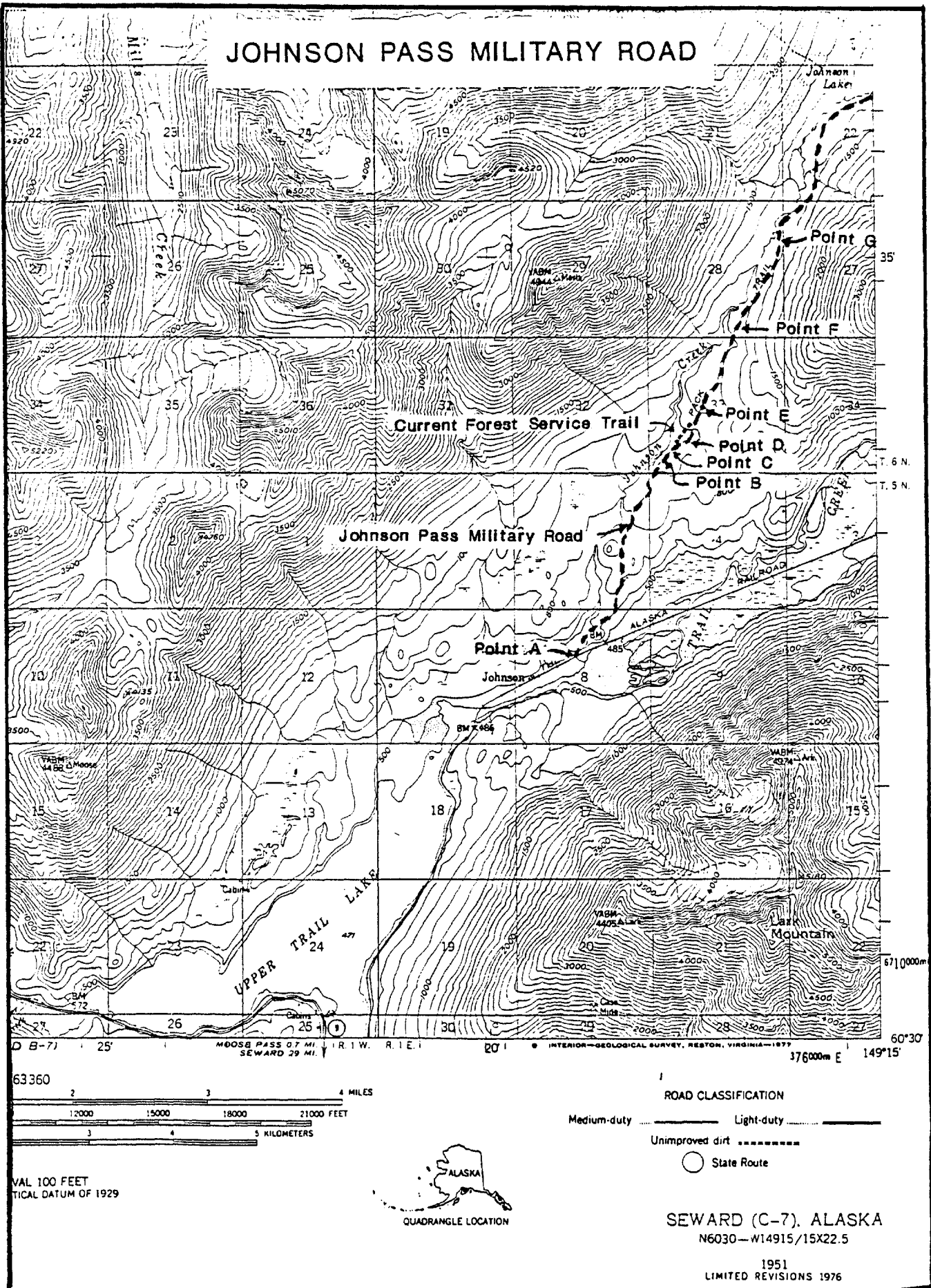
- n.d. Memories of Old Sunrise. Edited by Rolfe G.
Buzzell. Unpublished manuscript on file at
Chugach National Forest, Anchorage, Alaska.

Sleem, D.H.

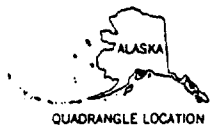
1910 Map of Kenai Mining District and Moose Pass
Regions, Kenai Precinct, Alaska. Rand,
McNally & Co., Engravers, Chicago.

Seward Weekly Gateway/Seward Daily Gateway, Seward,
Alaska. Various dates 1904-1920.

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



VAL 100 FEET
TICAL DATUM OF 1929



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

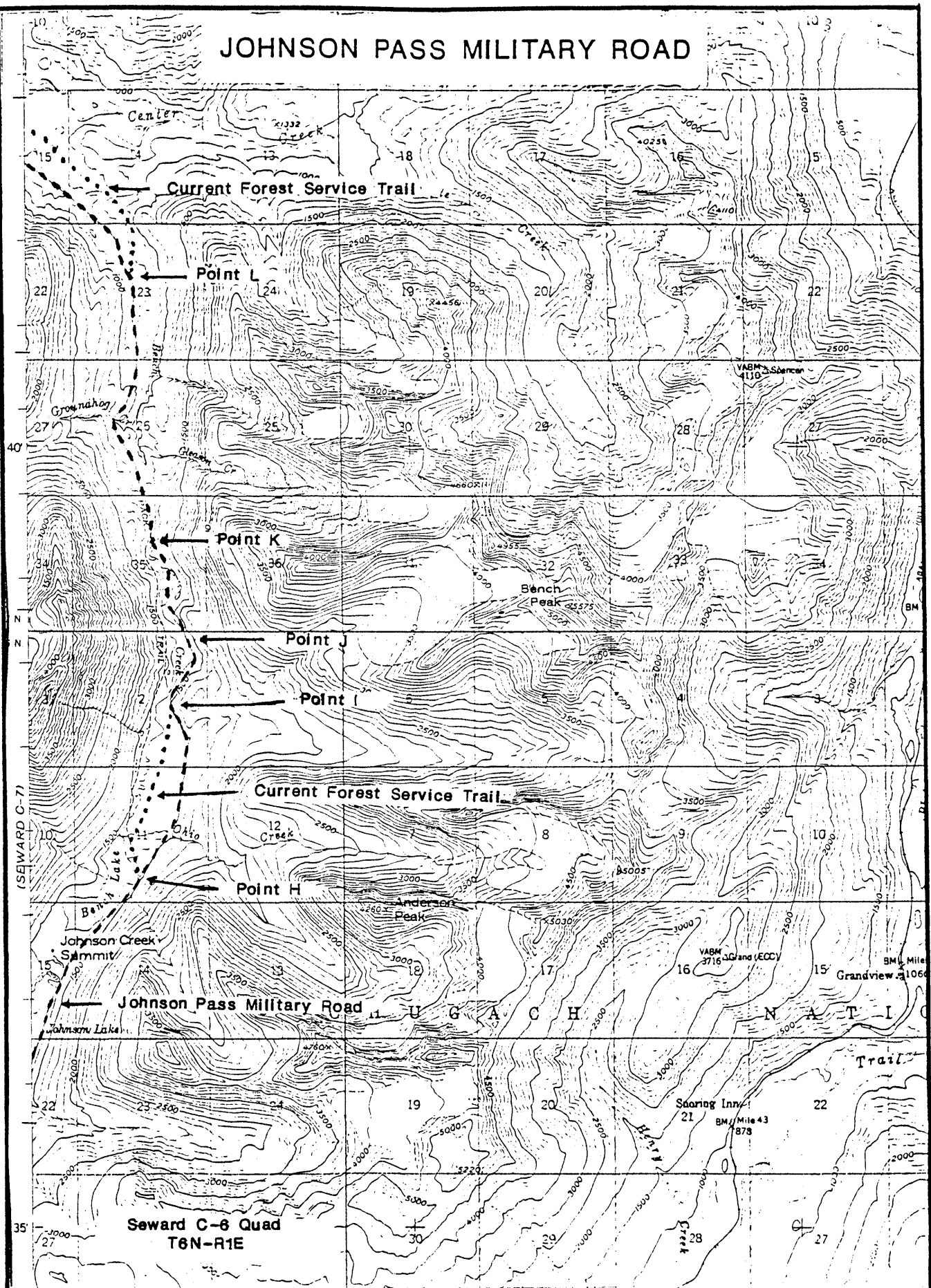
Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Unimproved dirt - - - - -
○ State Route

SEWARD (C-7), ALASKA

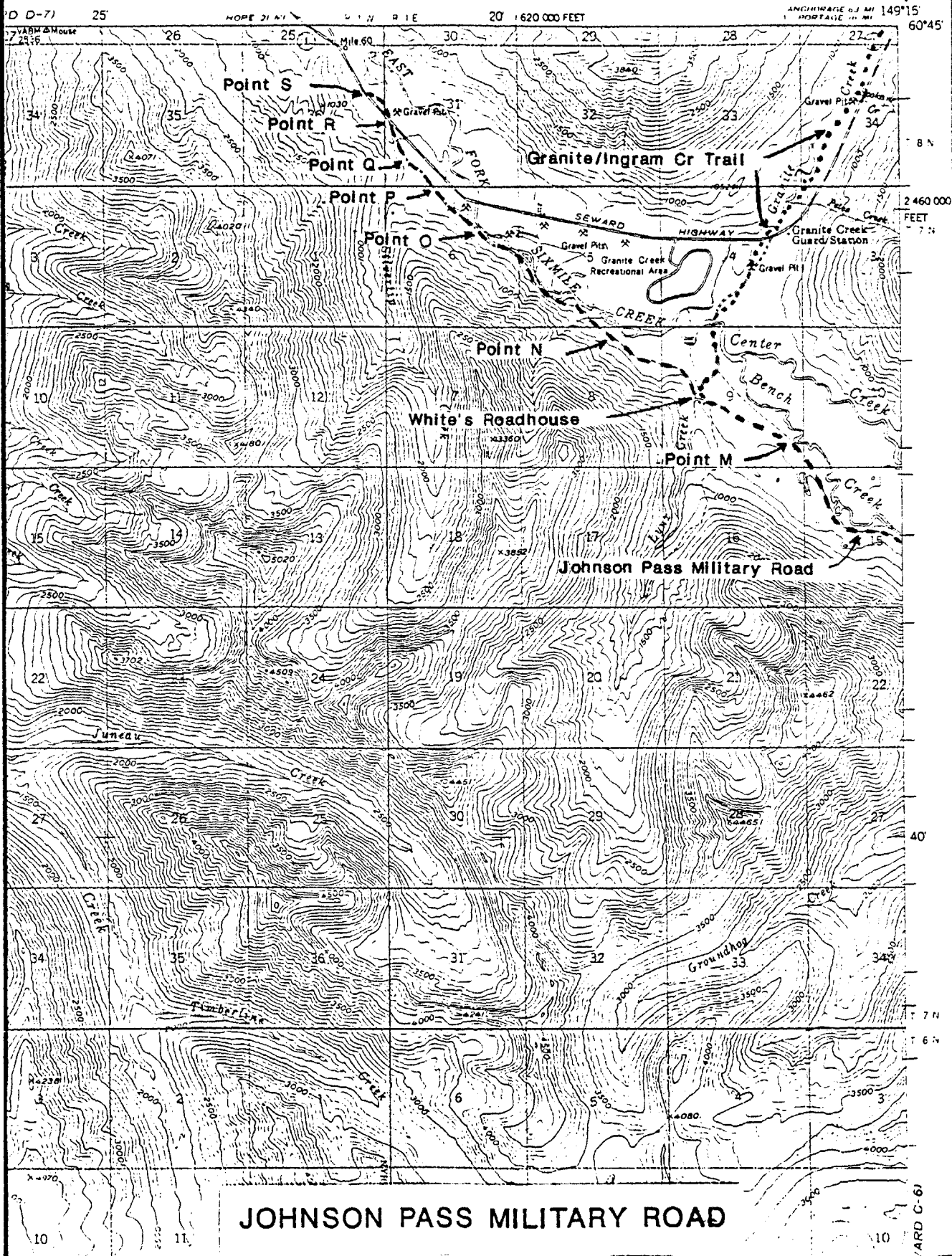
N6030—W14915/15X22.5

1951
LIMITED REVISIONS 1976

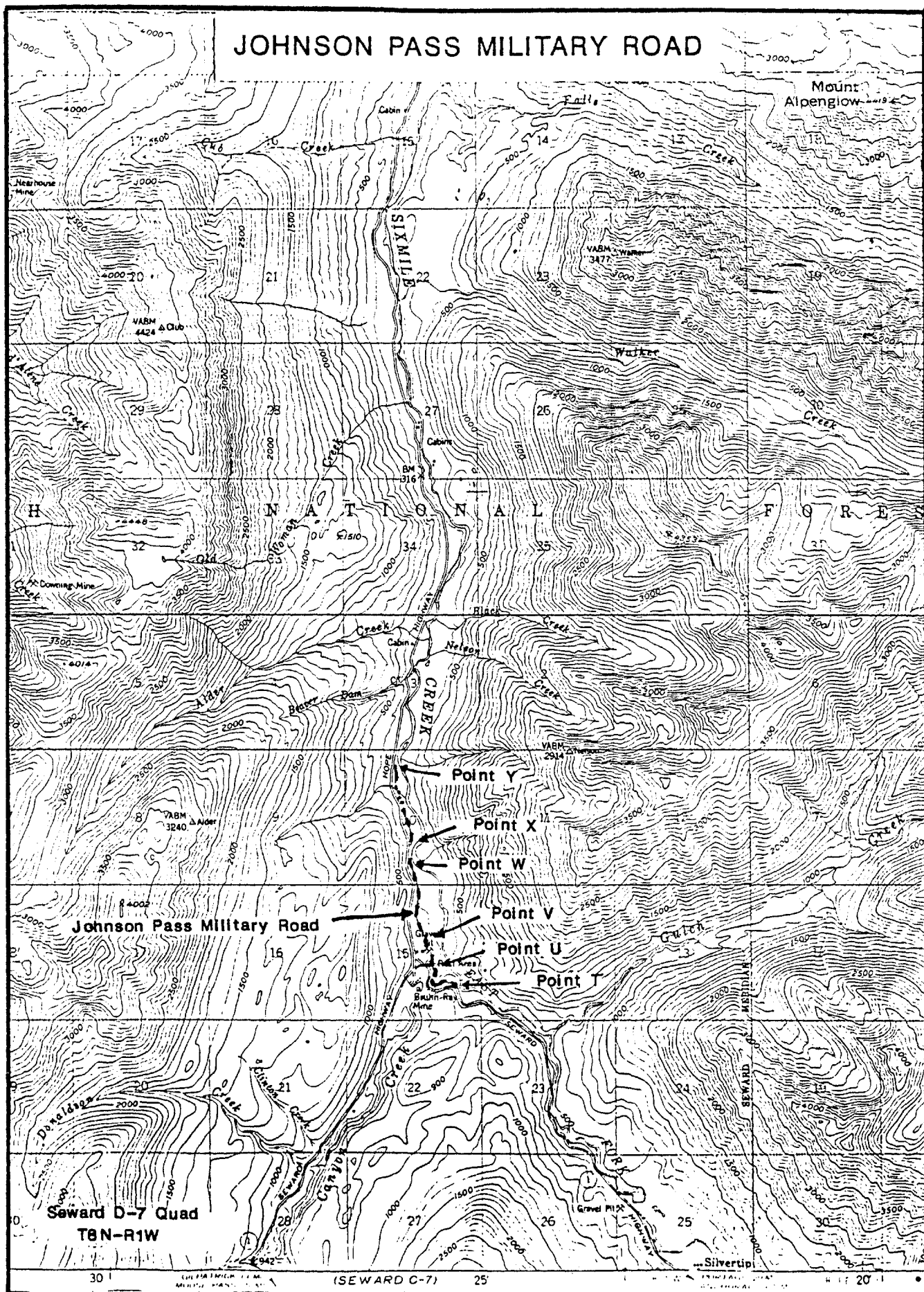
JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



SEWARD (C-7) QUADRANGLE
ALASKA-KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
1:63,360 SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Wagon Wheel Rim Beside Old Road
SE/NW Sec. 8, T5N-R1E, View to South
Creek has Assumed Wagon Road Route

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Southern End of Road, In Sec. 8, T5N-R1E, View to North
Also Monument CRMIDIT-J1



Wagon Road in SE Section 5, T5N-R1E, View to North

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Corduroy on Trail, View to South



Corduroy on Trail, Sec. 5, T5N-R1E, View to East

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Junction of Old Road and Current Trail, View to SW
SW/SW Section 33, T6N-R1E

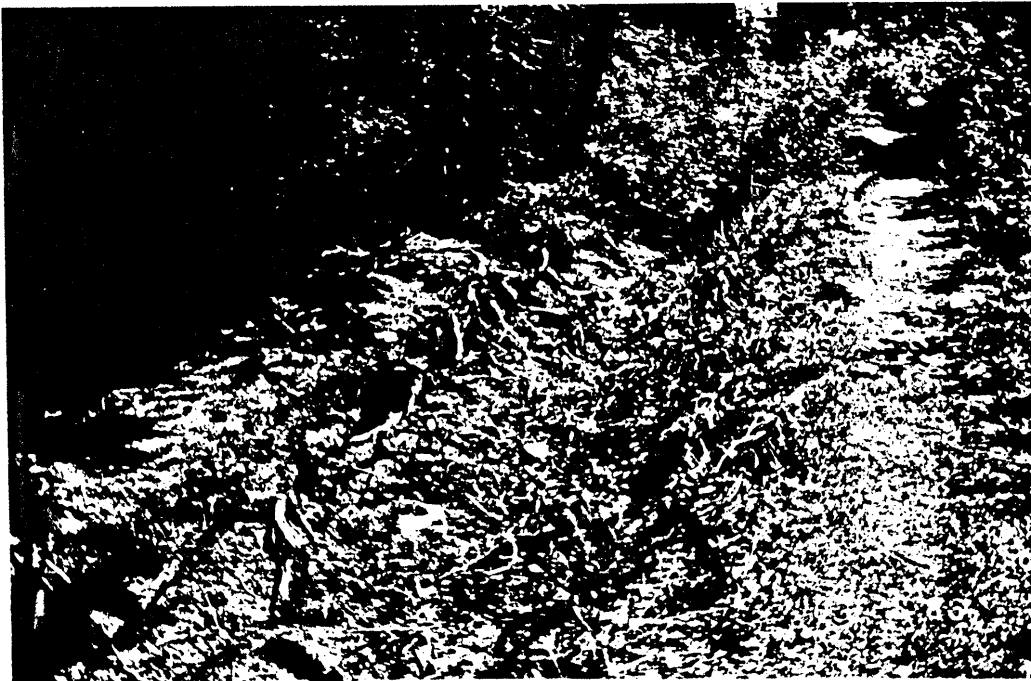


Recent Bridge on Trail/Road, SW/SW Sec. 33, T6N-R1E
View to NW

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Junction of Old Road and Current Trail, Point "E"
SE/NW Sec. 33, T6N-R1E, View to South



Drainage Ditch Beside Old Road, Sec. 33, T6N-R1E

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Corduoy on Old Road, Point "F", View to North
SW/SE Sec. 28, T6N-R1E



Trail/Old Road at South End of Johnson Lake, View to North

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Trail/Old Road at North End of Johnson Lake, View to North



Trail at North End of Johnson Lake, View to South

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Trail/Old Road Between Johnson and Bench Lakes, View to North



Trail/Road at South End Bench Lake, View to North

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD

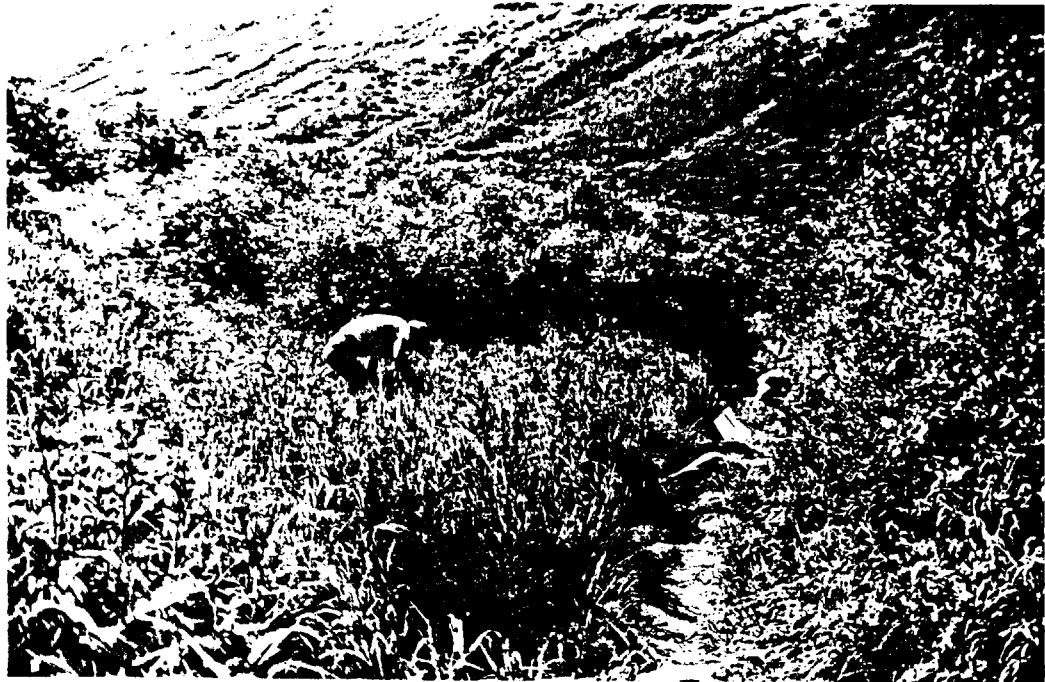


Old Road Diverges to Right of Current Trail, View to NE
Point "H" in SW/SE Sec. 11, T6N-R1E



Paul Anderson Monument on Current Trail, View to West

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Old Road On Left Meets Current Trail at Point "I"
NW/SE Sec. 2, T6N-R1E, View to SW



Old Road in NW/SW Section 31, T.8N-R.1W



Intersection of Old Road and Modern Road, View to NW
SW/SW Section 31, T8N-R1W



Old Road Departing Current Road, View to SE
NE/NW Section 6, T.7N-R.1E

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Old Road Eroded Into East Fork Creek, View to East
SW/NE Sec. 6, T7N-R1E



Trail Blaze on Tree Beside Road, Sec. 6, T7N-R1E



Old Road to NW of Silvertip Creek, View to NNW

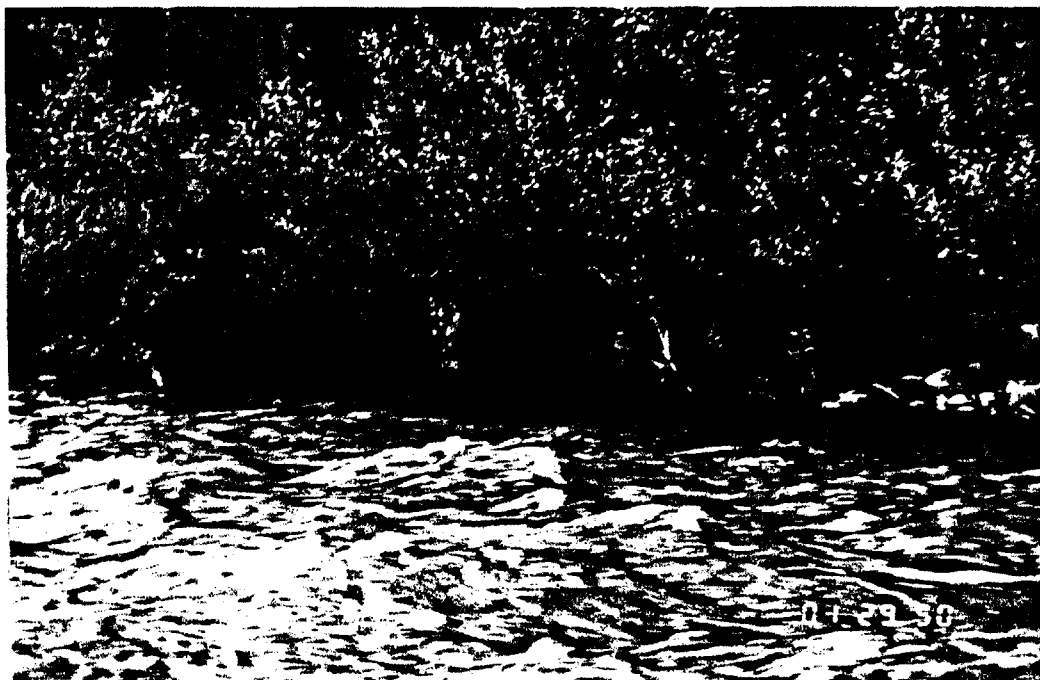


Old Road Descending to Canyon Creek, View to North

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Log Bridge Abutment, West Side Canyon Creek, View to SW

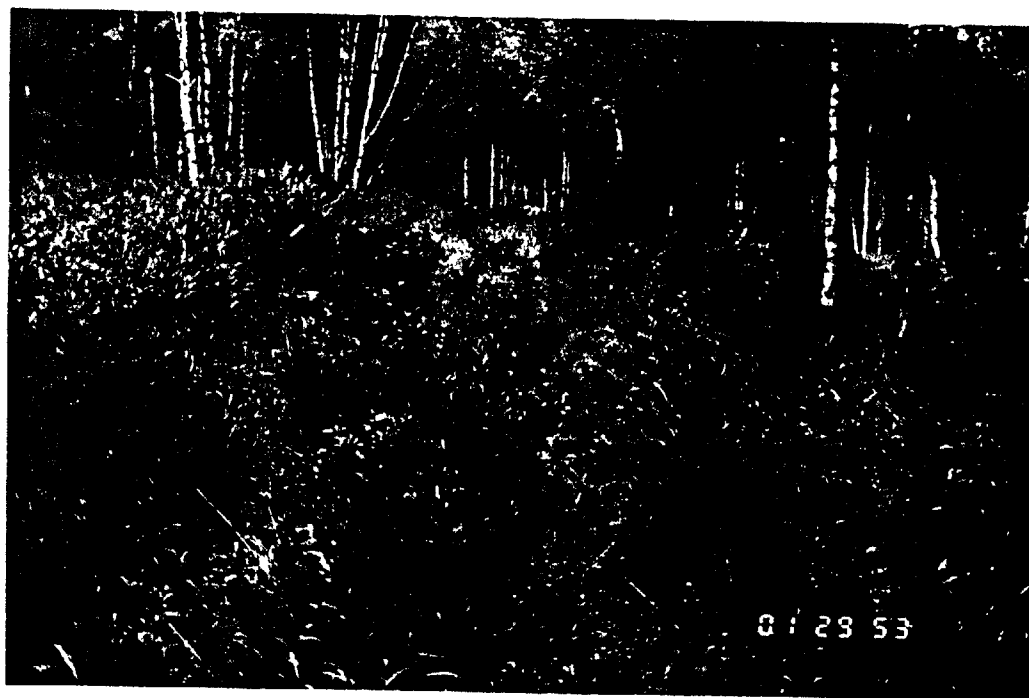


Log Bridge Pilings, East Side of Canyon Creek

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Old Road on West Side of Canyon Creek, View to North



Old Road to North of Gravel Pit Near Hope Wye, View NW

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Old Road in SW/NE Sec. 15, T8N-R1W, View to NW



Cairn Monument CRMIDIT-S1 and Old Road, View to NW
SW/NE Section 15, T8N-R1W

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Mining Berm at End of Old Road Segment, View to NW
NW/SE Section 10, T8N-R1W



Old Road in SW/SE Sec. 10, T8N-R1W, View to SE

JOHNSON PASS MILITARY ROAD



Overgrown Old Road Meets Hope Highway, Monument CRMIDIT-S4
NE/NW Section 10, T8N-R1W