

# National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission                      \_\_\_\_\_ Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Kantishna Historic Mining Resources of Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

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

- 1) Early Mining and Settlement in the Kantishna Hills, 1903–1942

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## D. Certification

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

Joan M. Anderson                      Deputy, SHPO                      21 March 2018  
Signature of certifying official                      Title                      Date

Alaska  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

(if more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

*Introduction*

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the gold rush came to the District of Alaska and altered the lives, landscapes, and politics of the region. Over the course of several decades, and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mineral exploration and extraction influenced settlement patterns throughout the region. The Kantishna Mining District developed in the Kantishna Hills north of Denali and was an outgrowth of profitable mining exploration taking place first in the Klondike region of Canada and then farther west in places like Nome and Fairbanks.<sup>1</sup>

The historic Kantishna Mining District is located approximately 100-150 miles southwest of Fairbanks in the northern foothills of the Alaska Range. The area encompasses roughly 50,000 acres and its boundaries are the Toklat River to the east, the Kantishna River to the west, Wonder Lake to the south, and the confluence of the Bearpaw and Kantishna Rivers to the north. The majority of the Kantishna Hills officially became a part of Denali National Park and Preserve in 1980.<sup>2</sup>

The Kantishna Gold Rush played an important part in the exploration and settlement of Interior Alaska and represents an important sequence in the broad pattern of Alaskan and American history. The arrival of the mining industry altered the landscape through a series of boom and bust cycles that continue to define the area’s history with the physical evidence left behind. Despite the hardships of surviving in a remote and extreme northern climate, several individuals arrived with the initial gold rush and remained steadfast in sustaining livelihoods by living off the land. Their lives contributed to the historic fabric of Kantishna’s mining past. The Kantishna Mining District is historically significant under National Register Criteria A, B, and D due to its association with exploration and settlement, social history, and industry.

The prospecting activities that commenced around 1903 and continued in cycles for the next hundred years transformed the Kantishna Hills. Historical evidence is scattered throughout the district and gives clues to the methods and technologies miners used to extract mineral resources. The scale and facilities changed over time, as did access to the region. Methods of placer mining left signs of hand-mining, ground-sluicing, hydraulic mining, bulldozer-mining, and use of power equipment. Extant resources related to lode mining can also be found, and include indications of lode mine development, extraction and milling, and milling and concentration. The area’s mining history can also be understood by sites

<sup>1</sup> Alaska was administered as a military district after being acquired from Russia in 1867, then a District in 1884. Its political designation changed several times as it became a Territory in 1912 and achieved statehood in 1959. “Denali” is a variant of the Koyukon Athabascan word for the highest mountain in North America located in the Alaska Range. The mountain’s name was officially changed from Mount McKinley to Denali in August of 2015.

<sup>2</sup> “Kantishna” is a label for the defined region but also the name of one of the settlements originally called “Eureka.” Throughout the document the terms “the Kantishna,” “Kantishna Hills,” “Kantishna District,” and Kantishna Region” are used interchangeably when referring to the roughly 50,000 acre area.

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and structures that assisted miners with subsistence and social functions.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of the Kantishna Mining District extends beyond the mere opportunism and “gold fever” that fueled the stampede of 1905. And although hundreds of people gave up and abandoned the mining district by the end of 1906, a handful of miners remained in the Kantishna Hills for years to come still hoping to make a fortune or at the very least, eke out a living. During the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, prospectors, and eventually full-scale mining companies continuously looked to the remote Kantishna Hills to extract gold, silver, lead, arsenic, zinc, copper, and antimony deposits. Exorbitant transportation and overhead costs consistently dashed the hopes of many who hoped to find returns on their investments. Over time, Kantishna’s lure was only survived by a small number of resilient individuals who endured the climate and used their resourcefulness to create a unique community; the evidence of their lives and insights into their past are spread throughout the region.

During mining’s period of significance in the Kantishna Hills, between 1903 and 1942, political decisions often determined the economic viability of mining in Kantishna, and eventually brought it to a virtual halt during the height of World War II. The economics of mining was also affected by the perceptions and realities of infrastructure improvements which, given the mineral potential, kept investors returning with optimism.

After the War, the area continued to see mining activity on a small scale, but there was never another rush to the area and a substantial amount of land was exhausted of its minerals. Much of the notable activity and production was carried out by Earl Pilgrim at Stampede Creek (just west of the Clearwater Fork of the Toklat in the eastern Kantishna Hills) due to the war industry’s desire for antimony, which was used in the manufacture of ammunition, and the federal government’s subsidies which helped support it. Most of the few year-round residents from the original stampede and the 1920s revival died either during the War or shortly thereafter.<sup>4</sup>

While the heaviest concentration of mining remained in the Kantishna Hills post-1906, mines were also established elsewhere in the vicinity of what was then known as Mount McKinley—in places such as Slippery Creek, Copper Mountain, and the Golden Zone.<sup>5</sup> Commercial mining continued to take place within the present-day boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve up until the end of the 1985 summer season, and small-scale mining operations still continue to this day.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service, “The Quest for Gold: An Overview of the National Park Service Cultural Resources Mining Inventory and Monitoring Program (CRMIM),” by Becky M. Saleeby, National Park Service (Anchorage, 2000), 153-172, 277-295.

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service, “Drainage Histories of the Kantishna District, 1903-1968 (draft),” by Rolfe G. Buzzell, Anchorage: National Park Service, 1989, 18-22.

<sup>5</sup> In 1930, the U.S. Congress officially changed the name of Copper Mtn. to Mt. Eielson in honor of Carl Ben Eielson, a well-known early aviator in Alaska. See Jane Bryant, *Snapshots from the Past: A Roadside History of Denali National Park and Preserve* (Denali National Park and Preserve, AK: National Park Service, 2011), 118.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North: An Administrative History of Denali National Park and Preserve*. Vol. 2, *General Park History Since 1980, Plus Specialized Themes* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 2008), 377.

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The physical evidence of Kantishna's historic mining period is scattered throughout the region and includes dwellings (usually log cabins and their outbuildings), a mill, prospect holes, adits, tailings, dams, ditches and trenches, sluice boxes, cairns, hydraulic nozzles, flumes, transportation systems, pits, and portable mining equipment.

*Kantishna before the Gold Rush*

The Kantishna mining region lured prospectors the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the area's Athabascan occupation dates back several millennia.<sup>7</sup> A few Athabascan bands that descended from earlier Native inhabitants frequented the northern and western boundaries of what is now Denali National Park and Preserve at the beginning of the first Kantishna Gold Rush era (1905-1906). Early explorers and anthropologists observed Native settlement patterns in the Kuskokwim and Kantishna River regions which included moving seasonally to fish and hunt. The Kantishna Hills functioned as an overlapping subsistence territory for Upper Kuskokwim, Lower Tanana, and Koyukon bands. The pre-contact population of Kantishna is thought to have been quite large but it eventually diminished due to frequent Athabascan wars followed by epidemics brought from Russian, European, and Euro-American colonists.<sup>8</sup> The Kantishna Hills that encompass the historic mining activity and exploration were known to local Athabascans as "Ch'edzaye," which means "heart." "Ch'edzaye" was mapped into "Chitsia" and now is the geographic place name for a mountain and creek where Judge James Wickersham triggered the Kantishna stampede by discovering gold in 1903.<sup>9</sup>

Although most of the historical figures now associated with the Kantishna Mining District's period of significance are non-Native, Athabascans were present at the Kantishna Town Site when hunter-naturalist Charles Sheldon first arrived there in 1906.<sup>10</sup> Citizenship laws prior to 1924 precluded Alaska Natives from filing mining claims; however, they worked as laborers and were active in transportation and supply networks in the Kantishna region.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Documentation of Native presence in the Kantishna region does not extend beyond 2,500 years. The name "Kantishna" is derived from the Lower Tanana and Koyukon Athabascan words that described the river with the same name which flows into the region.

<sup>8</sup> National Park Service, "Native Place Names of the Kantishna Drainage, Alaska: Kantishna Oral History Project," by Dianne Gudgel-Holmes. Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1991, 27-28; National Park Service, "Land Use in the North Additions of Denali National Park and Preserve: An Historical Perspective," by William Schneider, Dianne Gudgel-Holmes, and John Dalle-Molle. Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1984, 9-18.

<sup>9</sup> National Park Service, "Native Place Names of the Kantishna Drainage, Alaska: Kantishna Oral History Project," by Dianne Gudgel-Holmes, Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1991, 27-28; National Park Service, "Land Use in the North Additions of Denali National Park and Preserve: An Historical Perspective," by William Schneider, Dianne Gudgel-Holmes, and John Dalle-Molle, Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1984, 57-58.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Sheldon, *The Wilderness of Denali: Explorations of a Hunter-Naturalist in Northern Alaska* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 111.

<sup>11</sup> William Brown, *Denali: Symbol of the Alaskan Wild: An Illustrated History of the Denali-Mount McKinley Region, Alaska* (Virginia Beach: Donning), 75.

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***The Klondike Gold Rush***

The famous 1896 gold discovery in the Klondike set off one of the largest gold rushes in history as hordes of prospectors made their way into the Yukon. The Klondike Gold Rush led to exploration of the District of Alaska for gold and other mineral deposits. Following news of the great Klondike strike, prospectors scoured the Alaska-Yukon region for untapped ore deposits and eventually found themselves in Nome, Fairbanks, and the Kantishna Hills. Many of the explorers and settlers of Kantishna were veterans of the Klondike.<sup>12</sup>

Responding to the rise in prospecting activity, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Army prepared much-needed maps and information about the District of Alaska’s resources. In 1898 and 1899 alone, these two government agencies conducted five different survey and reconnaissance missions through the countryside around Mount McKinley. Arguably the most important of these expeditions to the future of Kantishna was a 1902 USGS mission led by geologist Alfred H. Brooks and topographer De Witt Lee Reaburn. The survey resulted in the first information published regarding the geology and geography of the Kantishna Hills.<sup>13</sup> Brooks most comprehensive report about the region was not published until 1911 but he contributed some initial survey results to a 1904 report:

The latest reports of placers in this field locate them in the vicinity of Mount McKinley. Several parties of prospectors ascended Kantishna River, a southwestern tributary of the Tanana about 100 miles from the Yukon. These men report the presence of auriferous placers in the Kantishna Basin, near the foot of the mountains. The writer, who traversed this region in the summer of 1902, is unable to substantiate this report. Of the streams which flow into the Kuskokwim from the Alaskan Range few, if any, even carried colors. In some of the streams of the Kantishna drainage system, however, some colors were found, and there was other evidence of mineralization. It seems at least possible that this field may yet produce placer gold.<sup>14</sup>

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**EARLY MINING AND SETTLEMENT IN THE KANTISHNA HILLS, 1903-1942**

***Discovery of Gold in the Kantishna Hills, 1903–1904***

James Wickersham, the U.S. District Judge for Alaska, led the first recorded attempt to climb Mount McKinley during the summer of 1903. Leaving for the mountain in May of that year, Wickersham’s

<sup>12</sup> William R. Hunt, *Golden Places: The History of Alaska-Yukon Mining* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1990), 83.

<sup>13</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, 5-7; Alfred H. Brooks, “An Exploration to Mount McKinley, America’s Highest Mountain,” from the Smithsonian Report for 1903 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1904), 407-425; Alfred H. Brooks, “Placer Gold Mining in Alaska in 1903” in “Contributions to Economic Geology, 1903” by S.F. Emmons and C.W. Hayes (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1904), 48; Alfred H. Brooks, “The Geography and Geology of Alaska: A Summary of Existing Knowledge” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1906); Alfred H. Brooks, “The Mount McKinley region, Alaska, with descriptions of the igneous rocks and the Bonnifield and Kantishna districts, by L.M. Prindle” (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1911), 169-179.

<sup>14</sup> Brooks, “Placer Gold Mining in Alaska in 1903,” 48.

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climbing party started in Fairbanks and used a southerly course very much like one of the recommended routes outlined by Brooks and Reaburn. Traveling aboard the steamer ship *Tanana Chief*, the Wickersham party embarked from Fairbanks and steamed down the Tanana River and up the Kantishna River. At the confluence of the Kantishna and Toklat Rivers, the team disembarked and continued south towards the mountain by overland route. And although the Wickersham party ultimately failed to reach the summit, they did find a small amount of gold along their route in the gravels of Chitsia Creek, a stream located in the northern section of the Kantishna Hills not far from where the party had disembarked. Claims for these discoveries were filed at the recorder's office in Rampart, Alaska after the trip.<sup>15</sup>

Around the same time as Wickersham's modest find, a prospector by the name of T.J. Minsee made other gold discoveries in the Kantishna Hills. According to a newspaper article printed in the September 22, 1903, issue of the *Nome Nugget* under the headline "A Rich Section Is the Mount McKinley Country," Minsee spent a year prospecting and hunting in the Mount McKinley area and found gold in every creek that he prospected. The article however, did concede that "owing to the remoteness of that [Mount McKinley] section from a base of supplies real mining or prospecting is almost impossible." The article went on to say that without adequate transportation, "there can be little or no development of a confessedly rich section until a railroad penetrates the country from the North Pacific coast."<sup>16</sup>

In spite of these logistical challenges, news of gold in the Kantishna Hills area attracted more prospectors to the area. In 1904, there was an increase in prospecting as the land recorder's office in Fairbanks filed over 100 claims in the Kantishna region. That year, a veteran miner of the Klondike Gold Rush named Joseph Dalton, and his partner, Matt Regan, spotted promising amounts of gold in a Toklat River tributary just to the east of the Kantishna Hills. Modest gold excavation during 1904 was not enough to generate a significant gold rush, and there were probably no more than 50 people in the region that year.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The Kantishna Gold Rush, 1905–1906***

The spring of 1905 was eventful for Joe Quigley. The Klondike veteran not only filed mining claims in hills near Fairbanks (the new town that had developed due to its own gold rush at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), he also migrated southwest and became one of the earliest prospectors to exploit the riches of the Kantishna region. On May 7<sup>th</sup> Quigley staked Discovery Claim on Caribou Creek on the northern edge of Kantishna. Around the same time, Dalton and a different partner, Joe Stiles, returned to the Toklat River drainage and they prospected along Crooked Creek. Dalton and Stiles moved southwest

<sup>15</sup> National Park Service, "Cultural Landscape Report for the Kantishna/Wonder Lake Area, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska (draft)," by Timothy W. Layton and Eliot Foulds, National Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (Boston, 2012), 7-9; William Brown, *Denali: Symbol*, 41-43.

<sup>16</sup> *Nome (Alaska) Nugget*, 22 September 1903.

<sup>17</sup> National Park Service, "Kantishna Gold!," by Chris Allan. National Park Service, 2004, accessed September 16, 2015, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/kantishna-gold.htm>; Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 2.



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after several weeks and continued to seek gold in tributaries of Moose Creek.<sup>18</sup>

In June, Quigley and his partner Jack Horn (also a Klondike veteran) made a significant gold discovery that affected the Kantishna region's transformation during that summer. They found paying quantities of placer gold at Glacier Creek. Just a few weeks later, in July, Dalton and Stiles prospecting work along Moose Creek paid off as they encountered a few of the richest gold deposits in the Kantishna; first at Eureka Creek and then a few days later at Friday Creek.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly after their discoveries in the summer of 1905, partners Quigley and Horn traveled to the recorder's office in Fairbanks to submit their claims.<sup>20</sup> News of Glacier Creek and other Kantishna successes— combined with knowledge of earlier discoveries made by the likes of Dalton, Regan, Minsee, and Wickersham – sparked a stampede to the Kantishna Hills in July of 1905. Most business people in Fairbanks and many Klondike veterans immediately sought to capitalize on the latest gold frenzy.<sup>21</sup>

The initial wave of stampedeers to the Kantishna Hills included seasoned prospectors and miners who had previously toiled in the goldfields of the Klondike. One of the first stampedeers on the scene was George Bryne from Dawson City in the Yukon District. According to a newspaper article from the July 19, 1905 edition of the *Dawson Daily News*, Bryne was not the only one from Dawson to leave for the Kantishna Hills: "Quite a number of other old-time Dawsonites [*sic*] have gone into the McKinley district, and it is reported good pay has been found on several creeks there."<sup>22</sup>

This connection with Dawson City and the Klondike Gold Rush shows that the history of the Kantishna region belongs to the larger, regional history of Alaska-Yukon mining. Mining in the Kantishna Hills did not occur within a vacuum but instead fits into the context of the stampedes and rushes that preceded it. As prospects faded in one location, people moved elsewhere hoping to find new, unexploited riches.

### Early Transportation

In the summer of 1905, stampedeers started their journey to the gold-bearing streams of the Kantishna Hills by steamer ship. These steamer ships, or "steamers," followed the same southerly, upriver route used by Judge Wickersham in 1903. As news of the Kantishna discoveries spread, more and more

<sup>18</sup> Jane Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley: A Wilderness Life in the Shadow of Mount McKinley* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 52-53; Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 2.

<sup>19</sup> Glacier Creek was known as Trapper Creek before it was renamed by Quigley and Horn. Chris Allan, "Kantishna Gold!" National Park Service (2004), accessed September 16, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/dena/historyculture/upload/Kantishna%20Gold.pdf>; 2-3; Bryant, *Snapshots from the Past*, 163; Tom Walker, *Kantishna Miners, Musers, and Mountaineers: The Story Behind Mount McKinley National Park* (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co. 2005), 15-16.

<sup>20</sup> According to historian Jane Haigh, when mining claims had to be filed in Fairbanks, Joe Quigley could make the 150-mile walk in four or five days.

<sup>21</sup> Allan, "Kantishna Gold!"

<sup>22</sup> *Dawson (Yukon) Daily News*, 19 July 1905.

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prospectors began looking for passage into the mining district. In addition to the *Tanana Chief*, which had brought Wickersham to the area two years earlier, by 1905, another steamer called the *White Seal* was also ferrying passengers into the Kantishna Hills.<sup>23</sup> As the stampede progressed, the Fairbanks steamer ship industry experienced further activity. On August 15, 1905, the *Fairbanks Evening News* reported that three additional steamers – the *Tana*, *Luella*, and *Florence S.* – were scheduled to depart for Kantishna. On August 19, 1905, the *Alaska Forum* printed the name of yet another steamer: the *Jennie M.*<sup>24</sup> Thus, by mid-August 1905, at least six different ships were operating between Fairbanks and the headwaters of the Kantishna and Bearpaw Rivers. Due to the high demand for travel into the mining district, steamer ships operated on a regular schedule during the summer of 1905.<sup>25</sup>

The steamer ships carried passengers up the Kantishna River as far as water levels would allow. When water levels became too shallow for the steamers to continue, passengers transferred to smaller craft such as launches, poling boats, and horse-drawn scows which continued up the Bearpaw River. Finally, dogsled and horse-drawn sledges hauled cargo to the gold bearing streams.<sup>26</sup>

All told, each mode of transportation made for an expensive trip. According to one newspaper account, as many as one hundred people declared their intention of traveling aboard the *White Seal* to the diggings but when it came time to pay for freight and fare “the number thinned considerably.”<sup>27</sup> According to historian William E. Brown, big financiers showed little interest in mining districts such as the Kantishna because given the relatively modest yields, the significant amount of time, money, and labor required just to reach the district did not warrant large scale investment.<sup>28</sup>

For those who had the luxuries of dog teams and transportation planning time, the frozen winter trails offered an easier alternative route to Kantishna than the damp, muddy, mosquito-ridden summer option. Winter travelers followed frozen waterways and a series of trails developed through trial and error. Most prospectors on their way to Kantishna started in Fairbanks and followed the Tanana River to the mouth of the Nenana.<sup>29</sup> They proceeded up the Nenana about 20 miles until arriving at the base of the Kantishna Hills. At the base of the foothills winter travelers turned west and passed the Knight’s Roadhouse on the Toklat River which was north of Chitsia Mountain. The trail moved southward along the Toklat until it met the Clearwater Fork. From Clearwater it moved to Myrtle Creek, across a low divide to Spruce Creek, and down Spruce until reaching the mines along Moose Creek. The winter trail from Fairbanks to the heart of Kantishna at the confluence of Moose and Eureka Creeks was approximately 165 miles. With a dog team and ideal conditions, the trip could be made in 27 hours.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Fairbanks Evening News*, 22 July 1905. This newspaper article contains the first known mention of the “Kantishna Stampede.”

<sup>24</sup> *Rampart Alaska Forum*, 19 August 1905.

<sup>25</sup> *Fairbanks Evening News*, 15 August 1905. Much of this article was reprinted verbatim in the September 2, 1905 copy of the *Nome Nugget*.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, *Denali: Symbol of the Alaskan Wild*, 64.

<sup>27</sup> *Fairbanks Evening News*, 22 July 1905.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *Denali: Symbol of the Alaskan Wild*, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Early 20<sup>th</sup> century government reports refer to the Cantwell River, the name was eventually changed to the Nenana River.

<sup>30</sup> Walker, *Kantishna*, 22-24.

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Settlements

Steamer ship companies were not the only Fairbanks-based businesses closely watching the diggings. The *Fairbanks Evening News* also described the attention given to Kantishna by the Fairbanks business community at large, particularly that of investors and merchants:

It seems that nearly every business man [*sic*] in this city is interested in one way or another in the new diggings. Most of them, 'are in' on the association claims staked, and others have grubstaked individual prospectors. Then, too, a large quantity of provisions has been sold and more will follow if the 'district' meets with their expectations.<sup>31</sup>

Timing was of critical importance to investors and merchants. The boom and bust nature of stampedes was not kind to latecomers. Stampedes were emotionally driven events that thrived off optimism and good news in the press. The fleeting character of the stampedes meant that businesses had to act both quickly and furtively in order to maximize profits. Some ambitious groups chartered steamers for the purpose of establishing entire towns nearest the diggings. These "townsite parties" as they were called, often operated within a cloud of secrecy so as to ensure that plans were kept safe from rivals.<sup>32</sup>

Despite prospectors' attempts to keep discoveries quiet, the press was still able to get the scoop and contributed to the frenzy. During 1905 and 1906, the Kantishna Mining District was a major news story not just in the Fairbanks area but throughout the Alaska-Yukon region. Articles about the mining district appeared in newspapers as far away as Nome, Seward, and Dawson City.<sup>33</sup> The *Seward Gateway's* front page reported:

It is now claimed here that Eureka Creek, the new discovery in the Kantishna river district, is the richest gold area ever known. Jack [Joe] Dalton on Discovery claim is said to be taking out thousands daily by the ordinary process of rocking. It is claimed that the discoveries already made exceed the richest ever made in the Klondike. Remarkable strikes have been made on Eureka, Glacier and Moose Creeks.<sup>34</sup>

Rampart's newspaper, the *Alaska Forum*, contained a front page headline proclaiming, "New Kantishna Diggings Proving to be Rich." The article included favorable reports about gold returns and four different townsites being surveyed.<sup>35</sup>

In 1905, a number of small settlements did spring up in the proximity of the Kantishna Hills. Most of them resulted from the need for transshipment points along the grueling route leading to the mining district. The first town to grow was Bearpaw about three miles up the Bearpaw River from its confluence with the Kantishna River. At Bearpaw, large steamers unable to continue upstream unloaded freight and

<sup>31</sup> *Fairbanks Evening News*, 15 August 1905.

<sup>32</sup> Allan, "Kantishna Gold!"

<sup>33</sup> Allan, "Kantishna Gold!"

<sup>34</sup> "Keep Up Rush to Kantishna," *Seward Gateway*, 2 September 1905.

<sup>35</sup> "New Kantishna Diggings Proving to be Rich," *Alaska Forum*, 2 September 1905.

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passengers. Smaller watercraft navigated farther upstream and along the banks of the Bearpaw River, the boomtowns of Diamond (at mouth of Moose Creek; about 60 miles above the mouth of the Bearpaw) and Glacier City (at mouth of Glacier Creek; about 12 miles above Diamond) were established. Both towns served as good sites to offload and store supplies near the terminus of navigable river travel.<sup>36</sup>

In 1905, Diamond and Glacier City were built up with hastily constructed log cabins, stores, hotels, saloons, restaurants, wall tents, gambling establishments, and sawmills.<sup>37</sup> Within a year, Diamond also hosted a freight station and a post office; John H. Hughes was appointed Postmaster.<sup>38</sup>

Another route option developed about forty miles upstream from the mouth of the Bearpaw on the Kantishna River. To support this route, the settlement of Roosevelt was established. At this transfer point it was approximately thirty miles overland to the gold bearing creeks of the Kantishna. The easiest path to the mining district was via a “winter trail,” so called because miners used the frozen ground to haul ore via dogsled across terrain that was otherwise boggy and difficult to cross during the warmer seasons. The trail was also known to be one of the “drier” options for those needing to travel overland in the summer.<sup>39</sup>

Roosevelt grew fast in 1905 with about 50 people building cabins for shelter and other services catering to prospectors in route to the Kantishna Hills. Charles Sheldon, who had come to the Mount McKinley region in mid-July, 1906, to study wildlife, traveled through the settlement and described it in his diary, “Roosevelt—a row of about thirty cabins, including two stores, a saloon, and a sawmill—on the southeast bank of the Kantishna.”<sup>40</sup> Another account from visitors in 1907 describes a dozen log cabins along the bank of the river and at least one two-story building which was presumed to be a hotel.<sup>41</sup>

In the summer of 1905, over 1,000 claims were recorded in the Kantishna Hills—a drastic increase from the previous year. Gold discoveries drew hundreds—and by some accounts up to 2,000 people—into the mining camp of Eureka which had sprung up at the confluence of Moose Creek and Eureka Creek.<sup>42</sup> The population included a mixture of speculators, miners, shopkeepers, and others hoping to earn a substantial profit. By August, the influx of people prompted Judge Wickersham to appoint Lee Van Slyke as the U.S. Commissioner of the burgeoning Kantishna Mining District. Van Slyke established a recorder’s office in Roosevelt where he administered claims. His job was that of a recorder but also a

<sup>36</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 165; Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 54; Walker, *Kantishna*, 21; Brooks and Prindle, “The Mount McKinley Region,” 175; “Tanana Boomers Establish a Town on Bearpaw,” *Nome Nugget*, 2 September 1905.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, “The Kantishna Region” by Stephen A. Capps (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1919), 75-76; Hunt, *Golden Places*, 284; Thomas K. Bundtzen, “A History of Mining in the Kantishna Hills,” *Alaska Journal* Vol. 8, (Spring 1978), 152; Walker, *Kantishna*, 25.

<sup>38</sup> Melvin B. Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices and Postmasters (Ketchikan: Tongass Publishing Co., 1965), 16; Walker, *Kantishna*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 165; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 268; Hunt, *Golden Places*, 284;

<sup>40</sup> Hunt, *Golden Places*, 285; Charles Sheldon, *The Wilderness of Denali*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> George Byron Gordon, *In the Alaskan Wilderness* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1917), 47-48.

<sup>42</sup> Eureka would later become known as Kantishna. It was also known briefly named “Shamrock City” in 1918.

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judge and coroner.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of the summer season of 1905, Eureka (near the richest placer gold mines) turned into the hub of the mining district. It contained several supply stores, a restaurant, a few cabins, and about 20 tents. The success of the 1905 gold rush led to the establishment of a post office at the Eureka camp in December of that year.<sup>44</sup> The “Eureka” name was changed to “Kantishna” when the post office was built; William A. Boss was appointed postmaster of the settlement.<sup>45</sup>

The Kantishna region’s stampede reached its zenith in September of 1905 after low water slowed river navigation via the Kantishna and Bearpaw Rivers and made it more difficult for prospectors to continue accessing the region until freeze over. By the end of September, nearly every creek and bench in the Kantishna Hills was staked.<sup>46</sup>

Placer and Lode Mining

Although the Kantishna region would eventually support both placer and lode mining operations on both small and large scales, the initial gold rush was mostly labor-intensive placer mining by rugged individuals. The early prospectors to the region used panning to locate and mine concentrations of placer gold, but also employed rockers and sluice boxes to assist with their pick and shovel methods.<sup>47</sup>

As gold deposits became more difficult to extract, Kantishna miners turned to boomer dams, ditches, and flumes to wash away gravel and surface soil. They imported pipes and nozzles and diverted water behind “header dams” to carve away the benches hydraulically. Like fire-hoses, nozzles called ‘giants’ were used to blast away the earth to either side of a gold-rich creek. Evidence of these techniques is abundant in the Kantishna District. The hydraulic mining operation at 22 Gulch (AHRS# MMK-052) contains a good example of this technique with remnants of hydraulic guns and pipe fittings, hand-stacked tailings, and wooden dams (other resources include a cabin ruin, collapsed cache, rock retaining wall, a trash scatter, and other mining equipment).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”; Walker, *Kantishna*, 25; “Official Town for Kantishna,” *Dawson Daily News*, 19 September 1905.

<sup>44</sup> Depending on context, references to “Kantishna” may allude to the region or the former Eureka settlement at the confluence of Moose and Eureka Creeks. Sometimes the old Eureka settlement is also referred to as “downtown Kantishna.”

<sup>45</sup> Ann Kain and Phil Brease, “Going for the Gold in Kantishna,” National Park Service, accessed October 21, 2015 <http://www.nps.gov/articles/aps-v5-i2-c6.htm>; Walker, *Kantishna*, 20; Brooks and Prindle, “The Mount McKinley Region,” 177; Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices,” 31.

<sup>46</sup> Ann Kain and Phil Brease, “Going for the Gold in Kantishna,” National Park Service, accessed October 21, 2015 <http://www.nps.gov/articles/aps-v5-i2-c6.htm>; Walker, *Kantishna*, 20; Brooks and Prindle, “The Mount McKinley Region,” 177. Depending on context, references to “Kantishna” may allude to the region or the former Eureka settlement at the confluence of Moose and Eureka Creeks. Sometimes the old Eureka settlement is also referred to as “downtown Kantishna.”

<sup>47</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”

<sup>48</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 343-354. The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS), managed by the State of Alaska’s Office of History and Archaeology (Alaska SHPO), is a data repository with information on reported cultural resources in the state. The National Park Service’s List of Classified

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Not all of the early mineral exploration was about gold. The 1905 Russo-Japanese War increased the market price of antimony which was refined from the mineral stibnite and used to manufacture ammunition. Stibnite occurred throughout the Kantishna District and was found along Slate Creek (tributary of Eldorado Creek) and at the confluence of Caribou and Last Chance Creek between 1904 and 1905. The high price of antimony in 1905 compelled Joe Quigley to process the ore at his "Last Chance Mine" claim; however, he was unsuccessful in his attempt to capitalize on the high price. By the time Quigley's ore shipped to market, the price of antimony had dropped and he had to abandon the venture. The problem of transportation costs due to distances and lack of access hindered development of the Kantishna District throughout its history. Quigley continued to prospect for mineral lodes and achieved success identifying significant silver/galena lode deposits on Mineral Ridge which later became known as Quigley Ridge.<sup>49</sup>

Early-comers like Dalton, Stiles, Quigley, and Horn were a few of the fortunate prospectors. Most of the latecomers to the Kantishna region in 1905 missed out on the valuable mining claims and left the region—never to return. Others, like Klondike veterans Harry Karstens and Charles McGonagall, staked claims, but also saw the opportunity to bring the new market other services. By the winter of 1905-1906, the partners split duties as McGonagall worked the claims and Karstens developed trails for a mail and freight service to the various settlements.<sup>50</sup>

### *Boom and Bust, 1906–1909*

1906 was a milestone year in the history of Alaska mining. It was the peak year in the history of Alaska's gold production and was second only to Colorado in its output. 1906 remained a relatively busy time for the Kantishna district as miners continued to work creeks and benches throughout the hills. Dalton and Stiles' Eureka and Friday Creek claims netted \$120,000 (equivalent to nearly \$3 million dollars today). One of the nuggets found at Eureka that summer weighed 43 ounces and earned the nickname "Queen of Eureka." Nearly 50 workers mined the first half-mile above the mouth of Eureka while earning \$1.25 per hour in wages. Depending on their shift, they labored either during the day or the evening usually earning about \$15 per shift plus board.<sup>51</sup>

Sheldon described the Eureka town setting during his 1906 visit, "Eureka is enclosed by fairly high mountains mostly devoid of timber except along the creeks. The grating sound of the shovels as they were forced into the gravel bar, the voices of the miners, and the general bustle of a busy camp seemed strangely out of harmony with the surrounding country, which otherwise imparted a feeling of solitude and a sense of the remote lonely wilderness."<sup>52</sup>

Structures (LCS) is an evaluated inventory of all historically and/or architecturally significant resources under jurisdiction of the agency.

<sup>49</sup> Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 5.

<sup>50</sup> Walker, *Kantishna*, 16-23.

<sup>51</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 167; Hunt, *Golden Places*, 285; Walker, *Kantishna*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> Sheldon, *The Wilderness of Denali*, 8.

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Some people returned to the Kantishna region in search of fortune, but by the end of the 1906 summer, the gold rush had largely subsided. Although it was not as busy as the 1905 stampede, there were still 239 mining claims filed in the Kantishna Mining District, down from 1023 the previous year. In autumn of 1906, there were about 20 people in the Kantishna Town Site (AHRs# MMK-009) and it contained about 20 tents and several cabins. The post office closed on October 14, less than a year after it was opened. By the end of the year, Glacier City had 12 residents, Diamond had four, and Roosevelt was down to one person. Commissioner Van Slyke left his post at Roosevelt and was replaced by Ernest L. Foster who moved the Commissioner’s office to Glacier City.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the placer mining that dominated the 1905 season, prospectors also engaged in lode mining in 1906 as they found veins of silver, lead, copper, antimony, and zinc in sizeable quantities.<sup>54</sup> While many disappointed miners and opportunists were leaving Kantishna late in 1906, gold was discovered at Yellow Pup Creek and stirred some short-lived optimism. The news probably contributed to the nearly 100 men who remained in the District over the winter to prospect.<sup>55</sup>

After much of the Kantishna District cleared out following the 1906 season, the towns were abandoned. For over a decade, Glen Creek was the only place in the Kantishna District that resembled a settlement. In 1909, despite the drops in claims, a recorder’s office was moved to Glen Creek. That same year, an 81.33 ounce nugget was discovered by Glen Creek miners James Mulville and Frank Hagel. It was the largest nugget ever found in the Kantishna District, and bigger than any nugget ever found in the Fairbanks District. In the subsequent years, new mining claims continued to decline. 1907 recorded claims dropped to 145 from 239 the previous year. By 1908 they dropped to 69.<sup>56</sup> Glen Creek contains a ruin of a cabin from this period (AHRs# MMK-063; LCS ID. 036531).

The physical evidence of the 1905 Kantishna Gold Rush has been largely obscured and eroded through subsequent cycles of mining booms in the area. Archeological excavation is necessary to uncover ruins, pits, and other sites associated with this significant period in the Kantishna Mining District’s history.

***Longtime Residents***

A handful of Kantishna stampeders remained in the region long-term, and in the process, affected the landscape and character of the remote area. Famed artist-explorer Belmore Browne traveled through Kantishna Hills a few years after the stampede and detailed his impression of the residents: “It was interesting to see this unusual side of life. Here were men from many different lands, but the hard life in the open, the search for gold, and the separation from civilization had stamped each one with a certain

<sup>53</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 152. Hunt, *Golden Places*, 285; No. 2 (1978): 152; Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices,” 23; Walker, *Kantishna*, 30. Ernest and Gertrude Foster managed the Hamilton freight station in Diamond during the peak of the Gold Rush.

<sup>54</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”

<sup>55</sup> Walker, *Kantishna*, 31-32.

<sup>56</sup> Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”; Walker, *Kantishna*, 32, 100.

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indefinable air that gave them a personality of their own. In nature’s stamp mill they had been polished down until they represented a type.”<sup>57</sup>

Among them, Fannie McKenzie, a veteran of the Klondike stampede, established Mrs. McKenzie’s Roadhouse at Glacier Creek in 1906. McKenzie stayed in Kantishna for the rest of her life by utilizing a combination of hunting, trapping, gathering, and hospitality skills that made her locally famous. She lived with one of the only other longtime residents—Joe Quigley—shortly after moving to the area and eventually married him—adopting his surname.<sup>58</sup> Longtime Mount McKinley National Park Ranger and Superintendent Grant Pearson described Fannie as “one of the most colorful characters of all the north.” He praised her cooking, embroidery, hunting skills, selflessness, humor, and overall ability to survive and thrive in the Kantishna. Following her death Pearson published an article in the *Alaska Sportsman* reflecting on her life:

She was a dog musher, prospector, trapper, hunter, woodcutter, gardener, and one of the best sourdough cooks I have ever run across. At a Christmas dinner once, Fannie served black bear roast, gravy, mashed potatoes, fresh cabbage, hot rolls, currant jelly, cranberry sauce, and fresh blueberry shortcake. Only the flour and sugar had been freighted in. The rest was from the country.<sup>59</sup>

The Quigleys’ major influence on the Kantishna region between 1905 and 1944 is evident in the many associated resources that survive throughout and near the ridge that bears their name. These include the cabin and artifact scatter at the Silver Pick Mine (AHRs# MMK-089); the adit and tailings pile at the Little Annie Mine, the cabin ruin, trails, terraced gardens, and artifact scatters at Red Top Mine; the property just north of Friday Creek that contains the Fannie Quigley House, outbuildings, and planting beds. In addition, resources connected to the Quigleys may exist at Glacier Creek where they maintained a home between the first Kantishna Stampede and at least 1916.<sup>60</sup> Belmore Browne’s 1913 account provided vivid descriptions of Fannie Quigley’s hospitality and the “log palace” on Glacier Creek:

Our hostess was one of the most remarkable women that I have ever met. In this rugged wilderness she had built a home that would do credit to civilized communities. The cabin was large, clean, and well lighted. Over the door as you entered hung a caribou head, and in the eaves above it were swallows’ nests, and as we talked the birds went about their daily lives within a few feet of us and their happy twittering never ceased from morning to night. The cabin door opened into a small vestibule, which in turn gave entrance to the big living-room. A fresh-killed moose skin was nailed on the floor, hair side down, and a magnificent sheep head hung on the wall. There was a liberal supply of reading matter, and a large range in the corner gave promise of pleasant things in prospect for the inner

<sup>57</sup> Belmore Browne, *The Conquest of Mount McKinley* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1913), 360; Belmore Browne, “Hitting the Home Trail from Mt. McKinley,” *Outing* Vol. LXII, No. 4 (July 1913), 396.

<sup>58</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*.

<sup>59</sup> Grant Pearson, “Fannie Quigley, Frontierswoman,” *The Alaska Sportsman*, August, 1947.

<sup>60</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 405-487; Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 66-68



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man. Through the window you could see a flower garden, while below the cabin a truck garden flourished inside a pole fence.

To the east was a large, well-stocked underground cellar, where even in the summer time a bucket of water placed on the floor would freeze. To the north stood out-houses, or storerooms, while between them and the house ran a line of dog kennels that burst into life and howls whenever one of our dogs ventured near. Below the buildings stretched the scarred, boulder-strewn diggings which showed that men had toiled there for gold. Looking up the creek, a white spot or two showed that there were more cabins scattered along the creek, while downstream your eyes slid over miles of open, rolling country to the dim blue masses of timber that filled the Kantishna Valley.

Fanny McKenzie, or Mother McKenzie," as she was called by the miners from Moose Creek to Tolovana, is, I believe, the only woman in the Kantishna mining district.<sup>61</sup>

Joe Quigley was also respected in Interior Alaska as a prospector. In 1905, the *Nome Nugget* proclaimed that "Mr. Quigley is known to all of the old-timers, and he is known to be extremely conservative and was in great demand."<sup>62</sup> After Mount McKinley National Park was established, the Superintendent suggested that Joe Quigley's mining operation and respect for the Park's regulations be model for other prospectors.<sup>63</sup>

Although the status of the Kantishna' District's prospects suffered in late 1906, some of its most historically famous residents did not arrive until late that year. William "Billy" Taylor, Tom Lloyd, Pete Anderson, and Peter Nelson started working various claims throughout the district, and the former three achieved fame with the 1910 summit of Denali's north peak, known as the "Sourdough Expedition."<sup>64</sup> Charles McGonagall, who was the fourth member of the Sourdough Expedition, frequented Kantishna after partnering in a freight business with Harry Karstens. McGonagall eventually had mining claims throughout Kantishna for many years.<sup>65</sup>

Tom Lloyd, William (Billy) Taylor, Pete Anderson, and Charles McGonagall all lived and/or mined along Glen Creek which was the only place resembling a settlement in Kantishna region following the 1905-1906 gold rush. Lloyd and Taylor were business partners and employed Anderson and McGonagall in their Kantishna mining operations. Taylor mined in the region for decades and eventually had placer claims with a cabin on Caribou Creek and antimony claims with Lloyd at Slate Creek beginning in 1915.<sup>66</sup> McGonagall was an experienced dog musher who arrived to Kantishna late in the stampede. He and Harry Karstens saw an opportunity to operate a freighting business to the burgeoning mining district

<sup>61</sup> Belmore Browne, *The Conquest of Mount McKinley* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 360; Browne, "Hitting the Home Trail," 398-400.

<sup>62</sup> *Nome (Alaska) Nugget*, 9 September 1905.

<sup>63</sup> "Mount McKinley National Park Superintendent's Report," April 6, 1926.

<sup>64</sup> Taylor and Anderson were the only two members of the climbing expedition to summit the north peak of Denali.

<sup>65</sup> "Eureka/Kantishna DOE," 10; Bryant, *Snapshots*, 167.

<sup>66</sup> Walker, *Kantishna*, 100; Saleeby, "CRMIM," 168, 286; Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 198; Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 75.

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so they partnered in 1905. McGonagall remained in the area and staked claims at Glacier Creek and did development work at the Galena Prospect near the confluence of Eureka Creek and Moose Creek.<sup>67</sup> The three climbers are associated with sites throughout the Kantishna Hills but some of their earliest work was lode mining at the Glacier Peak Sites between 1906 and 1921. The Glacier Peak Site (MMK-079; LCS ID. 036533) contains two collapsed adits, a prospect, a rock tent ring, a lumber scatter, and a three-walled rock structure. Also at Glacier Peak are the Skookona Prospect Tailings Piles (MMK-080; LCS ID. 036534), Hand-stacked Tailings Piles (MMK-080A; LCS ID. 036535), and the Skookona Prospect Claims Marker (MMK-080B; LCS ID. 036536). The McGonagall Gulch Site (MMK-082) also near Glacier Peak contains a cabin ruin, two collapsed adits, and a prospect pit.<sup>68</sup>

Joe Dalton, one of the first to strike gold in Kantishna, typically left during the winters but mined every summer from 1904 until his death in 1943. Dalton and Joe Quigley were the most successful miners during the District’s historic period.<sup>69</sup> Charles Sheldon and Belmore Browne both reflected on their interactions with Dalton during their explorations of the region in the early 1900s.<sup>70</sup> The Mount McKinley National Park Superintendent’s Report for April 1944 reported his death: “Word was received from Fairbanks that Joe Dalton, oldtimer from the Kantishna mining district, passed away on Dec. 2 . . . He was buried [sic] near his one room cabin on the banks of Moose creek by Fannie Quigley and Johnnie Busia. Joe Dalton was the original discoverer of placer gold in the Kantishna . . . He died penniless.” Dalton lived and was buried within the boundaries of the Kantishna Town Site, possibly at the Eureka Cemetery on the south end of the site. His cabin, which was prominently designated on a 1931 U.S. Geological Survey map, is no longer extant.<sup>71</sup> Dalton was closely associated with the activity on Eureka Creek during its exploration and the Eureka Creek hand-stacked tailings piles remain as contributing features of the historic period (AHR# MMK-0126A; LCS ID. 036557).

Not as much is known about Peter Nelson’s life in the Kantishna Hills because there are not published reminiscences about him. His name appears in several government reports and it is evident that he worked and lived along Eureka Creek for many years. He was a placer gold miner who worked the number 13 claim above Discovery on Eureka Creek—among the most productive creeks in the region. He used boomer dams and sluice boxes in the 1920s.<sup>72</sup> Parts of Nelson’s operation survive and it provides some of the historic period’s remaining cultural resources. The Peter Nelson Cabin Site (AHR# MMK-086; LCS ID. 036537) is located about 2,300 feet northeast of the confluence of Eureka Creek and Lucky Gulch. The claims adjacent to the cabin site were staked by Joe Dalton and mined continuously following the 1905 stampede. There is a partially collapse log cabin, hand-stacked tailings, and a lumber debris scatter that is possibly part of a collapsed shed. The cabin and other structures were built in the

<sup>67</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 53, 66; Saleeby, “CRMIM,” 289.  
<sup>68</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 335-342.  
<sup>69</sup> Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 152.  
<sup>70</sup> Sheldon, *The Wilderness of Denali*, 7; Browne, “Hitting the Home Trail,” 395-397.  
<sup>71</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, “Lode Deposits of Eureka and Vicinity, Kantishna District, Alaska” by Francis G. Wells (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1933), Plate 28.  
<sup>72</sup> Territory of Alaska, “Annual Report of the Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska, 1920,” by B.D. Stewart (Juneau: Alaska Daily Empire, 14; Norman L. Wimmler, “Placer Mining in Alaska in 1929: Alaska Territorial Department of Mines Miscellaneous Report 195-12 (Juneau: Alaska Territorial Department of Mines, 1929), 113.

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1920s.<sup>73</sup> It is not clear what year Peter Nelson died, but longtime Kantishna resident Johnnie Busia buried him, possibly in the Eureka cemetery in the Kantishna Town Site.<sup>74</sup>

### 1910s

The 1910s were somewhat uneventful in the Kantishna District until the Great War ended. Antimony was mined by Billy Taylor because of war demand but quite a few resident miners enlisted to join the war.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the biggest development during this time, which ultimately affected the mining district in the long term, was the establishment of Mount McKinley National Park immediately south of the Kantishna Hills. The new national park was created on February 26, 1917, and was partially a result of activities taking place in the Kantishna Mining District. Conservationists were alarmed at the toll mining camps inflicted on the game population north of the Alaska Range. There was sympathy for the plight of the miners, and some of their concerns were addressed within provisions of the Park's legislation; however, within eleven years the miners' hunting exception was outlawed and within fifteen years the Park expanded to encroach on the Mining District.<sup>76</sup>

### Post War Boom in Kantishna, 1918-1929

In the summer of 1918, there were only 36 people living in the Kantishna Mining District and about half of them were original 1905 stamperders who had remained in the region.<sup>77</sup> World War I demobilization improved the labor market for Alaska mining operations, but political decisions and economic factors played a role in Kantishna's 1920s revival. In 1918, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada sponsored a bill that fixed the price of silver to \$1 an ounce which made it profitable to mine.<sup>78</sup> In addition, the prospect of the interior railroad from Seward to Fairbanks (constructed between 1915-1923), a trans-park road from McKinley Park Station to Kantishna (constructed between 1922-1938), air travel, and the improvement of the Roosevelt to Moose Creek trail all brought hope that improved access to the remote area would decrease the overhead costs associated with extracting minerals.<sup>79</sup> During the 1920s, lode mining and placer gold mining witnessed a boom and brought the Kantishna Mining District back to life, including

<sup>73</sup> Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 355-362; Wells, "Lode Deposits of Eureka," Plate 28.

<sup>74</sup> Grant Pearson, "Little Johnnie of Kantishna," *The Alaska Sportsman*, July 1948, 7.

<sup>75</sup> "Exemptions Not Claimed in Kantishna," *Fairbanks Daily News Miner*, 28 September 1917.

<sup>76</sup> Mount McKinley National Park's legislation allowed for prospectors to hunt within the national park's boundaries; it was unprecedented in national park legislation. The continued slaughter of game during the 1920s prompted the National Park Service to eliminate the hunting provision in 1928.

<sup>77</sup> Tom Walker, *McKinley Station: The People of the Pioneer Park that Became Denali* (Missoula: Pictorial Histories), 2009, 93.

<sup>78</sup> The result of the Pittman Act was an increased value on the price of silver relative to market value. Coincidentally, Senator Pittman was a sponsor of Senate Bill 5716 which established Mount McKinley National Park in 1917. Fred L. Israel, "The Fulfillment of Bryan's Dream: Key Pittman and Silver Politics, 1918-1933," *Pacific Historical Review* 30, No. 4 (November 1961), 359-380.

<sup>79</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 90-91; Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 39.

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the resurgence of the Roosevelt, Diamond, Glacier City, and Kantishna settlements.

Lode Mining

Joe Quigley and Fannie McKenzie were married on February 2, 1918 at the Glacier Creek home of Kantishna District Commissioner J.C. Van Orsdel.<sup>80</sup> About that time, the Quigleys found silver-laced quartz on Quigley Ridge between Eureka and Friday Creeks at the Little Annie Claim. Within a year, mineral veins were located in a 35-mile stretch between Slate Creek and Stampede Creek. The veins included antimony, silver, lead, zinc, copper, arsenic, and free gold.<sup>81</sup>

An adit and tailings at the Little Annie site (AHRs# MMK-061) are evidence of the work Joe Quigley started before leasing the claim.<sup>82</sup> A 1919 U.S. Geological Survey report describes the Little Annie prospect and some of the Quigley development work:

This claim is developed by a number of open cuts and a tunnel having a total length of 147 feet . . . The quartz contains disseminated pyrite and pans a little gold. No galena or sphalerite was seen in the underground workings, but they are probably present, for large pieces of solid galena several inches in diameter have been found on the surface near the crop of the vein. A piece of this float galena on assay yielded 124 ounces of silver to the ton . . . Assays of the vein material have shown that the quartz carries a few dollars in gold to the ton.<sup>83</sup>

With a rise in value of silver, the Quigleys and others saw potential in the area’s ores and lured prospectors.<sup>84</sup> The passage of Pittman’s silver bill made the claims staked on Quigley Ridge attractive to investors. Two major investors, Thomas Aitken and Hawley Sterling of Fairbanks, leased sections of the Ridge from the Quigleys for the purpose of mining galena ores and shipping them to the Continental US to be processed.

In 1919, Aitken mined 500 tons of silver and gold-bearing ore and shipped it to a smelter in the contiguous United States. Interest in the Kantishna Hills’ potential grew and newspapers wrote about its promise. The *Nenana News* reported enthusiastically on Aitken’s Kantishna operation:

The decision of Mr. Aitken to develop the Galena properties on a comprehensive scale marks the commencement of a new era for the Kantishna Country, which has long awaited the coming of capital to put the properties on a producing basis.’ ‘With one

<sup>80</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 72.

<sup>81</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 170, 184; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 154; Allan, “Kantishna Gold!”

<sup>82</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 437. The log cabin at the Little Annie Mine Cabin was probably built by the Red Top Mining Company in the mid-1930s.

<sup>83</sup> Capps, “The Kantishna Region,” 104.

<sup>84</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 82; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 44;

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property producing, it is argued, it will not be difficult to secure backing for the many other propositions, which are awaiting development. In fact, it is confidently believed by those familiar with Kantishna conditions that the district will soon be the scene of great activity, with an influx of people rivaling the stampede of earlier days, when thousands were attracted to the district by the discovery of rich placers.<sup>85</sup>

The local Alaska media were not the only Kantishna enthusiasts. After surveying the Kantishna region in 1919 and 1920, the “Annual Report of the Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska” stated, “In respect to the number of men engaged in lode prospecting, and the extent of country covered by their operations during the seasons of 1919 and 1920, the Kantishna District is the first in importance in the Territory.”<sup>86</sup>

In 1920, Joe Quigley did his own lode work at Red Top Mine which was behind the cabin that he and Fannie occupied above the south side of Friday Creek. However, in 1921, Quigley leased Red Top to Hawley Sterling of Fairbanks. The lodes being developed at Red Top contained gold and silver-lead ore. Red Top produced about \$5,000 worth of gold between 1920 and 1924.<sup>87</sup> The existing historic mining resources associated with the Red Top Mine Site (AHRs# MMK-117) are considerable, including mine excavations containing a dry-stacked stone wall and wood cribbing, a spur road to the site, and the aforementioned cabin site associated with Joe and Fannie Quigley.<sup>88</sup>

Another original stamper, Charles McGonagall, initially staked the Galena claim on the west side of Quigley Ridge in 1913 (adjacent to the Park Road). McGonagall made some cuts but eventually leased the Galena Lode Mine (AHRs# MMK-090) to James Haney, a well-known Alaska miner, in 1920. Galena was one of eight mines on Quigley Ridge to ship ores outside in the early 1920s. Within the claim, four collapsed adits from the historic period remain, two of which might be prospecting holes. In addition there are tailings piles and an overgrown roadbed constructed by Haney that connected to the historic Kantishna access road between Eureka and Roosevelt.<sup>89</sup>

At the beginning of the 1920s, a significant lead-silver lode was discovered on Alpha Ridge, above Eldorado and Moose Creek. C. Herbert Wilson<sup>90</sup> three other partners developed a lode claim that included silver ore and some gold. Nearby Wilson’s claim on Alpha Ridge, prospectors Edgar Brooker, Sr. and Mace Farrar worked a claim that produced slightly richer silver.<sup>90</sup> During the 1920s, Alpha Ridge contained the only productive lode mining in the Eldorado Creek Valley of the Kantishna Hills. Although more prospecting continued throughout the decade, most mining likely ceased mid-decade after the lead-silver ore was exhausted.<sup>91</sup> The Alpha Ridge Mine and Camp from the 1920s era includes

<sup>85</sup> Haigh, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*, 85.

<sup>86</sup> Territory of Alaska, “Annual Report of the Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska, 1920” (Juneau: Alaska Daily Empire), 1921, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 13; Bryant, *Snapshots*, 171.

<sup>88</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 447-461.

<sup>89</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 413-418.

<sup>90</sup> Wilson and Brooker, Sr. both served as Kantishna District Commissioners in the 1920s.

<sup>91</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 315; Walker, *McKinley Station*, 97-98

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overgrown roads, a cabin (AHRS# MMK-091; LCS ID. 036541), a shed (AHRS# MMK-091A; LCS ID. 036542), a collapsed outhouse, a collapsed adit, prospect holes, a tailings dump, and other related mining equipment like a hand pump, railcar tracks, wood ore cart remnants, and artifact scatters.<sup>92</sup>

Along with Little Annie, Red Top, Galena, and the mines on Alpha Ridge, some of the most productive lode mines in Kantishna during the 1920s also included, Martha Q, Gold Dollar, and Golden Eagle. Together, they produced approximately 1,200 tons of ore which was worth about \$300,000.<sup>93</sup>

Placer Mining

Improved access also spurred renewed interest in placer gold. Two companies, the Kantishna Hydraulic Mining Company (KHMC) and Mount McKinley Gold Placer Company (MMGPC), saw potential in large-scale placer mining, and both companies made major investments in the Kantishna Mining District.

Most of the shallow placers of Moose Creek had been mined by hand and exhausted by 1916. Between 1914 and 1920, Dr. James Arthur “Doc” Sutherland and some other Fairbanks investors concluded that with the right equipment, there was potential to profitably mine the bench gravels of Moose Creek. The group acquired nearly 890 acres, which included 45 unpatented claims along Moose Creek between the mouth of Eureka Creek and Wonder Lake.<sup>94</sup>

Sutherland had preparations for hydraulic mining underway in 1919 but the cost and logistics of shipping supplies hindered the operation from the beginning. In 1920, KHMC started shipping equipment to the region using the northern access route to the region via the Kantishna River. Low water levels caused delays and required that KHMC spend most of the 1921 season continuing preparatory work for the project. They hoped to be operating by the end of the summer that year, but complete assembly of the pipe was not achieved. During 1921, employees built a five foot dam at Wonder Lake’s north end outlet. They also constructed a 12,000-foot-long ditch that was six feet wide and four feet deep. In 1922, a crew of 29 workers finally completed the hydraulic plant on Moose Creek and finished assembling the pipe. They also constructed a mess hall, a bunkhouse, and a cabin for the Sutherlands.<sup>95</sup>

Hydraulic mining started on July 10, 1922, and lasted for a little over a month. Seven men worked three eight-hour shifts for about 35 days. They allegedly cleared about 50,000 square feet of gravel nearly ten feet deep but the gold recovery was not enough to offset the substantial costs KHMC incurred over the course of the project. KHMC shut down its operation at the end of the 1922 summer and never returned. Others, including the Fink and Hamilton partnership, tried to utilize the hydraulic equipment in 1923 and 1924 but did not have success. Evidence of the Kantishna Hydraulic Ditch and Pipeline (AHRS# MMK-

<sup>92</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 315-324.  
<sup>93</sup> Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 11  
<sup>94</sup> Bryant, Snapshots, 180; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 44.  
<sup>95</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 180-183; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 156.

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019; LCS ID. 036540) still exists along the north end of Wonder Lake and the bench on the west side of Moose Creek leading north from Wonder Lake. There are remnants of a dam at the Wonder Lake outlet, remnants of the dam on Lake Creek (AHRs# MMK-019A; LCS ID. 036539), a linear depression from the ditch, and sections of metal pipe along the alignment.<sup>96</sup> Miner Johnnie Busia occupied one of KHMC’s abandoned log cabins on the west side of Moose Creek near its confluence with Eureka Creek and lived there until his death in 1957. It is now commonly known as the Busia Cabin (AHRs# MMK-017; LCS ID. 599769).<sup>97</sup>

In the early 1920s, KHMC was not the only hydraulic mining operation in the Kantishna District. Mount McKinley Gold Placer Company operated on Caribou Creek and had a similar fate to KHMC. MMGPC was organized by Billy Taylor and Bill Julian and they intended to mine both Caribou and Glacier Creek with their pipeline system. In 1920 and 1921, the supplies were hauled in on horse-drawn sleds via the winter route through Roosevelt. The ditch they built for the operation was about a mile long and included 450 feet of mainline pipe, 460 feet of flume, and 4,000 feet of sideline pipe. A placer camp was built a little over a mile downstream from the hydraulic works on Caribou Creek. The camp contained a milled lumber cabin, three outbuildings, and a log cache. In 1922 MMGPC began operation. A five man crew cleared approximately 70,000 square feet of gravel around six to eight feet deep but low grade gravels did not produce the amount of gold necessary to continue the operation.<sup>98</sup> MMGPC did not operate the hydraulic unit in 1923 and instead tested bench deposits. In 1924, MMGPC ceased its operations and leased its holdings to other outfits.

Physical evidence of the 1920s mining era at Caribou Creek includes the ruin of the Upper Caribou Creek Cabin (AHRs# MMK-023; LCS ID. 036517) and the ruin of an associated shed (AHRs# MMK-023A; LCS ID. 036518); two wooden penstock header boxes/regulator ruins (AHRs# MMK-041; LCS ID. 036571); and remnants of the Caribou Creek Hydraulic System (AHRs# MMK-042; LCS ID. 036570) which includes 2.4 miles of pipeline, a ditch, a wooden flume and associated head gate.

About the time MMGPC stopped operating, partners Margaret Hunter and Dewey Burnett moved into the northeastern edge of the Kantishna Hills and started mining a large bench several miles from the source of Crooked Creek (a tributary of the Toklat River). This is the same area where Joe Dalton made his initial Kantishna gold discovery nearly twenty years prior. Hunter and Burnett would continue to mine Crooked Creek with a combination of bulldozer and hydraulic mining for the next 41 years.<sup>99</sup> Crooked Creek contains a two-room log cabin ruin from around 1930 (AHRs# MMK-0120; LCS ID. 036593) and the ruin of a log cache (AHRs# MMK-0120A; LCS ID. 036594).

<sup>96</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 227-232; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 156; B ryant, *Snapshots*, 180-181; Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 9.

<sup>97</sup> In 1918, Johnnie Busia arrived in Kantishna and became one of its most prominent residents for the next four decades. Busia’s father, Marko, was in Kantishna during the original gold rush in 1905-1906. Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 249.

<sup>98</sup> Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 156; Saleeby, “CRMIM,” 166; Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 9.

<sup>99</sup> Saleeby, “CRMIM,” 170; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 157.

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Outside of the large-scale hydraulic operations, placer mining during the 1920s usually involved individuals or partnerships. In 1920, a trapper named Floyd Marsh and a group of five others struck gold at Yellow Creek which drains into Glacier Creek. That same year, Joe Dalton continued to placer mine on Eureka Creek with eight other men. Eureka Creek was the second largest producer of placer gold in the Kantishna District. In 1920, there was \$25,000 worth of placer gold produced in the District. In 1921, about 24 men worked about 14 placer mines and production fell to about \$12,000. In 1922, the presence of the hydraulic companies boosted the District production of placer gold for the lone season of operation, but only to about \$32,000. After they ceased operations, gold production fell to \$13,000 the following year which included 13 mines employing 19 men. The gold production would see a slight increase in 1924, but would go into a steady decline for the rest of the decade.<sup>100</sup> The Peter Nelson Cabin Site is the physical evidence remaining from the 1920s Eureka Creek production.

The ultimate failure of hydraulic mining in the 1920's, in combination with the Great Depression, resulted in the decrease of placer mining to pre-War production levels. The hydraulic operations at Moose and Caribou Creeks were abandoned by 1928. At the end of the decade, fifteen small mining operations remained in the District along Eureka, Friday, Glacier, Glen, Little Moose, Marten, Spruce, and Yellow Pup Creeks. During this time, most of the gold production in the District was from Caribou, Glacier, Glen, and Little Moose Creeks. It was no longer a product of large-scale hydraulicking, but instead was the result of hand-mining methods used in prior decades.<sup>101</sup>

Lode mining also ended up being short-lived. Despite the area's promise, the remote and forbidding landscape continued to exact a great cost for miners trying to eke out a living. Aitken processed lode deposits on Quigley Ridge until 1922 when the high costs of operation, especially transportation, forced him to abandon the investment.<sup>102</sup> Although there were several improvements to mining technology and infrastructure, the logistical costs of doing business were simply too high to recover reasonable profits:

The ore had to be transported by wagon 40 miles to Roosevelt, from which it was barged to Nenana, then carried by railroad to Seward. The ore was then transported by steamship to Puget Sound and then by railroad to Selby, Montana. The freight cost from Kantishna to Nenana was reported to be \$57 per ton. Transportation was so expensive that operations were not considered profitable if the ore contained less than 1000 ounces of silver per ton or otherwise had a value of less than \$150 per ton.<sup>103</sup>

Despite its eventual demise due to high transportation costs, the early 1920s was a fruitful period for mineral exploration in the Kantishna Hills. Joe and Fannie Quigley continued to have success lode

<sup>100</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 167. Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 8-10.  
<sup>101</sup> Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 11.  
<sup>102</sup> Fred L. Israel, "The Fulfillment of Bryan's Dream: Key Pittman and Silver Politics, 1918-1933," *Pacific Historical Review* 30, no. 2, (November 1961), 361-363; Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report for the Kantishna," 44; Jane Bryant, *Snapshots from the Past: A Roadside History of Denali National Park and Preserve* (Denali National Park and Preserve: National Park Service), 2011, 171; Frank B. Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North: An Administrative History of Denali National Park and Preserve, Volume 2* (Anchorage: National Park Service), 2008, 328.  
<sup>103</sup> Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 12.



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prospecting both within and beyond the Kantishna Hills. They prospected and discovered lead, copper, and zinc at Copper Mountain on the north side of the Alaska Range (renamed Mount Eielson in 1930). Copper Mountain drew miners and investors with about 50 claims being staked in the early 1920s.<sup>104</sup> During this period of renewed attention to the area’s mineral resources, prospectors scoured the region for lode deposits within a 30 square-mile area; even the Guggenheims were briefly intrigued by the area’s potential.<sup>105</sup>

Community

A result of the rekindled interest in Kantishna’s mining potential was that the old Kantishna Town Site, which was initially developed during the 1905-06 Gold Rush, reemerged as a thriving settlement because of the new operations and optimism. A main reason the Kantishna settlement was relevant again was because the KHMC hydraulic mining project endeavored to mine the benches lining Moose Creek downstream from Eureka Creek and it made sense to locate part of their operation at the “Old Eureka” camp at the confluence of the two creeks.

In 1919, C. Herbert Wilson was appointed U.S. Commissioner of the Kantishna District and worked out of Glen Creek. Near the time of his appointment, Wilson constructed a two-story log home in the Kantishna Town Site. Due to the influx of summer residents to Kantishna in the early 1920s, Wilson’s home became an office for his government duties including that of Post Master. He converted part of the home to operate as the region’s post office and he also sold supplies.<sup>106</sup> During the 1920s, the two-story building was often referred to as the Kantishna Post Office and functioned as a home, a general store, transient lodge, and unofficial Commissioner’s office. It is now called the Kantishna Roadhouse (AHRs# MMK-040; LCS ID. 036556).<sup>107</sup> Edgar Brooker, Sr. replaced Wilson in late December 1921. Brooker moved the official commissioner’s office to from Glen Creek to Friday Gulch where his wife Mary Brooker had opened a roadhouse.<sup>108</sup>

The other settlements that were established during the initial gold rush came back to life for a brief time in the 1920s. Land speculation started in Roosevelt but ultimately the old settlement just was a short-lived supply depot and transfer station. Two Post Masters—William B. Rodman and Emil Dorfuer—worked in Roosevelt between 1923 and 1927.<sup>109</sup> Diamond also was supply depot and transfer station and was assigned Post Master Lauriz C. Olsen in 1929. Glacier City once again contained commerce—Commissioner Wilson operated a supply store in the early 1920s and Billy Taylor maintained his home

<sup>104</sup> Hunt, *Golden Places*, 11. Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 329, 335.

<sup>105</sup> The Guggenheims were a wealthy family from the eastern United States who made a large fortune in mining industries. Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 155; Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 11-12.

<sup>106</sup> The population increased to about 100 in the summer of 1920 and doubled to nearly 200 by autumn; Walker, *McKinley Station*, 95; Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices,” 31.

<sup>107</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 187; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 45.

<sup>108</sup> Walker, *McKinley Station*, 98.

<sup>109</sup> Walker, *McKinley Station*, 100; Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices,” 54.

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and headquarters for the MMGPC there.<sup>110</sup> Glacier City contains multiple historic resources from the 1920s era including the Glacier City Cabin (MMK-003A; LCS ID. 036599), the Glacier City Scow (MMK-003B; LCS ID. 036600), Glacier City Cabin #2 (MMK-003D; LCS ID. 036602), Glacier City Barn (MMK-003E; LCS ID. 036603), Glacier City Blacksmith Shop (MMK-003F; LCS ID. 036604), and the Glacier City Main Office (MMK-003H; LCS ID. 036598).

Another important community development occurred with the arrival of John and Paula Anderson in 1918. They made their way to Glen Creek to find gold and though they did not ultimately find success prospecting, they turned their attention to accommodations for travelers and miners. Within a few years the Andersons had a roadhouse and fox farm operation at the northern point of Wonder Lake. The couple also raised and sold dogs to miners and prospectors. The roadhouse was near the KHMC dam and also along the path to the Copper Mountain District. By the late 1920s, the Andersons had left the property and the roadhouse burned down in 1932.<sup>111</sup>

Transportation in the 1920s

The Kantishna District’s inability to sustain long term development and settlement was always due to transportation problems. In 1917, miners in the District petitioned the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) and the Alaska Territorial Board to build a wagon road between Kantishna and the government railroad which was being constructed. Names on the petition included the Quigleys, Joe Dalton, Peter Nelson, Charles McGonagall, Alex Mitchell, Dan Sutherland and William Sborgia of Glen Creek, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton of Moose Creek. At the time, the ARC was surveying the “Route 46 – Kantishna Trail (75.75 miles)” which was a three stage road project. There was a 26 mile segment from Nenana to Knight’s Roadhouse on the Toklat River, a 37.75 miles segment from the Toklat to Diamond, and a twelve mile segment from Diamond to Glacier City.<sup>112</sup> Eventually the ARC responded when activity picked up in the early 1920s. In an effort to support the KHMC, MMGPC, and the lode miners on Quigley Ridge, between 1921 and 1924 the ARC upgraded the approximately 35 miles of trail between Roosevelt and Kantishna with a timber corduroy wagon road.<sup>113</sup> A mine inspector described the challenging travel routes to Kantishna in a 1922 report:

The only route available in the past for the transportation of any quantity of supplies to the Kantishna district is the water route down the Tanana River and up the Kantishna River to Roosevelt, and thence overland to the mines. The distance from Fairbanks to the mouth of the Kantishna is 155 miles, from the mouth of the Kantishna to Roosevelt is 156 miles, and from Roosevelt to the Kantishna Post Office is 35 miles, a total of 341 miles to cover an “air line” distance of 135 miles. The rivers are, of course, navigable

<sup>110</sup> Walker, *McKinley Station*, 94, 97; Ricks, “Directory of Alaska Postoffices,” 16.

<sup>111</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 38; 261-267.

<sup>112</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 37.

<sup>113</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 181; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 155; Territory of Alaska, “Annual Report of the Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska, 1922” by B.D. Stewart (Juneau: Alaska Daily Empire, 1923), 133.

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only during the summer months, but during that season of the year the first six miles of the overland portion of the route from Roosevelt to Kantishna are almost impassable for teams because of swamps. The usual procedure therefore involves the storage of supplies at Roosevelt until the swamps are frozen, when they can be crossed by horses and sleds. The cost of transportation over this route is \$80 per ton--\$40 by water to Roosevelt and \$40 by sleds from Roosevelt to Kantishna.<sup>114</sup>

The report described another trail from McKinley Park Station that loosely followed the future path of the McKinley Park Road, but emphasized the impossibility of transporting large quantities of supplies and its difficult winter traveling conditions. A winter access route described in the 1922 report was also described in 1925 and 1931 U.S. Geological Survey investigations. The winter route left the Alaska Railroad at Kobe or Lignite and moved west to the Knight's Roadhouse on the Toklat River; the Toklat and its Clearwater Fork tributary were followed to Myrtle Creek; then it went along Myrtle Creek almost to its head and crossed a pass to the head of Spruce Creek; Spruce Creek was followed down to Moose Creek and then downstream of Moose Creek to the Kantishna settlement at the confluence of Moose and Eureka Creeks. The route by sled from Fairbanks was approximately 165 miles. In the early 1920s freight along this route costed between \$240 and \$300 per ton and was almost exclusively moved by dog teams.<sup>115</sup>

The 1925 survey suggested the overland route from Roosevelt to the Kantishna post office was the main access route to the district.<sup>116</sup> By the time of a 1931 U.S.G.S. survey, it was clear that Roosevelt was no longer being used as a transfer station. The settlement was deserted and there were two main summer access routes. The first involved using the McKinley Park Road from the railroad at McKinley Park Station. Road construction was not complete but miners could travel as far west as construction was completed and then continue on the trail to Kantishna. The second was traveling by boat via the Kantishna and Bearpaw Rivers to Diamond and then moving overland by trail to Glacier City and the Kantishna Town Site:

In the past the route by way of Diamond was most used, and practically all the freight has been moved over it. As the trail from Diamond to Kantishna is boggy and difficult of travel during the summer the practice has been to bring supplies to Diamond by boat in summer and to haul them from Diamond to Kantishna by sled in the winter. The cost of freighting by this route, as well as the time required to move materials over it, which is often more than a year, has been a serious obstacle to mining activities.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Stewart, "Annual Report of the Mine Inspector, 1922," 133.

<sup>115</sup> Wells, "Lode Deposits of Eureka," 336; Stewart, "Annual Report of the Mine Inspector, 1922," 133. U.S. Geological Survey, "Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1925" by F.H. Moffit and others (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1927), 81.

<sup>116</sup> Moffit, "Mineral Resources of Alaska, 1925," 81.

<sup>117</sup> Wells, "Lode Deposits of Eureka," 336.

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In a 1931 investigation of the Kantishna District, the U.S. Geological Survey detailed transportation problems and offered hope for the region with the eventual completion of Mount McKinley National Park's road:

Most of the economic factors related to the development of mines in the Kantishna district are largely dependent on transportation. As the completion of the McKinley Park road will basically change the facility and cost of transportation into the Kantishna within a few years . . . Formerly shipments of ore were hauled on wagons to Roosevelt and taken by boat from Roosevelt to Nenana. The cost of hauling ore from Friday Creek to Roosevelt was \$32 a ton, and the charge from Roosevelt to Nenana was \$25 a ton. If there were any considerable tonnage the cost from Roosevelt to Nenana could be somewhat lessened.<sup>118</sup>

As the trans-park road continued to be constructed west from McKinley Park Station and eventually made it to Kantishna in the late 1930s, the need for transfer and supply stations along points of the Kantishna and Bearpaw Rivers was no longer necessary. Miners were increasingly using the park road for access. Places like Roosevelt, Diamond, and Glacier City never achieved the level of activity or land speculation like they did in 1905-06 and the early 1920s.

### *Kantishna in the 1930s*

The failure of large-scale hydraulic mining, the prohibitively expensive cost of transporting ores to smelters, and the decline of the economy during the Great Depression slowed activity in the Kantishna District. Most of the unpatented lode claims in the region lapsed. In 1930, hand mining methods were the only type of gold production present in the Kantishna region at Glacier, Glen, Little Moose, and Caribou Creeks.<sup>119</sup>

Mineral investigation continued to be pursued by Joe Quigley who discovered a valuable quartz-sulfide vein at his Banjo claim. While tunneling into a claim block at Banjo, Quigley was seriously injured when the tunnel caved in. Even though Quigley's injuries eventually led to his departure from the region, he and Fannie were able to capitalize from leasing the claim to Red Top Mining Company.<sup>120</sup>

On April 20, 1933, several years into the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt attempted to spur the economy by suspending the gold standard which tied the dollar to the precious metal. The executive action caused a rise in the price of gold and a renewed interest in Kantishna's gold-mining potential. With the higher price for gold and improved access due to the continued construction of the park road, investor interest in Kantishna returned almost immediately.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Wells, "Lode Deposits of Eureka," 360.

<sup>119</sup> Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 11.

<sup>120</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 171; Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 157.

<sup>121</sup> Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 51.

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During the summer of 1933, the Quigley’s leased the Red Top and Little Annie properties to General A.D. McRae. The park road was only constructed to mile 70 at the time, but McRae still attempted to haul in equipment to Quigley Ridge by using caterpillars. After drilling a 1,000-foot tunnel at Little Annie with a two-person crew, McRae ultimately did not find the operation worthwhile and dropped his option at the end of the season; however, the continued sharp rise in the price of gold in 1934 brought more investors and prospectors to the region.<sup>122</sup>

In 1935, the Red Top Mining Company was organized by E. Gustafson, C.M. Hawkins, and A.H. Nordale. They raised capital and started acquiring patented claims in Kantishna. They spent the next several years developing the infrastructure necessary to carry out a large lode-mining operation. They built a road, airstrip, mill, bunkhouses, and other structures that assisted them in extracting commercial grade gold ore on the Banjo claim.<sup>123</sup>

Starting in 1936, antimony mining had a revival in the Kantishna region after Earl R. Pilgrim acquired Stampede claims (north of Stampede Creek just west of the Clearwater Fork of the Toklat River) from Taylor, Drayton, and Trundy.<sup>124</sup> Pilgrim and Morris P. Kirk and Son, Inc. immediately started working the claims and by 1941 the Stampede became the largest antimony producer in the state (AHRs# MMK 016; LCS ID. 036572).<sup>125</sup>

***“Golden Years of Kantishna Mining,” 1937-1942***

By the mid-1930s, the Kantishna Mining District had endured multiple cycles of speculation and investment followed by disappointment regarding the prohibitive costs of mining in an inaccessible geographic region. Optimism returned mining once again because of the relatively high price of gold, cheap labor, and improved access to Kantishna. The late-1930s and early-1940s became the most productive era in the District’s history.<sup>126</sup>

In 1938, the trans-park road was completed to Kantishna which drastically improved access for mining operations. In 1938, a contractor named George Bachner built several buildings for the Red Top Mining Company. One of these buildings was a house near the Kantishna airstrip and it became Fannie Quigley’s main residence around 1939 (AHRs# MMK-020; LCS ID. 036514).<sup>127</sup> By the end of 1938, the Banjo Mill Site (AHRs# MMK-022) around the Banjo vein included seven miles of new road, an airstrip, a mill, bunkhouses, a blacksmith shop, a manager’s residence and outhouse, an assay shop, a cook house, an outhouse, adits, and debris scatters.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 332.

<sup>123</sup> Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 16.

<sup>124</sup> Charles Trundy was the Kantishna Mining District Commissioner from the mid-1920s to the 1930s.

<sup>125</sup> Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 158-159.

<sup>126</sup> Buzzell, “Drainage Histories,” 15.

<sup>127</sup> Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 481.

<sup>128</sup> Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 157; Layton and Foulds, “Cultural Landscape Report (draft),” 402.

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In 1939, the Red Top Mining Company (RTMC) was in full operation. Between 1939 and the summer of 1942 the Banjo mill (on the north ridge above Eureka Creek about two-and-a-half miles upstream from its confluence with Moose Creek) produced 6,259 ounces of gold, 7,113 ounces of silver, and 40,000 pounds of by-product lead and zinc. It was the fourth largest lode mining operation on the Yukon River Basin. An eight man crew operated the mill which included day and swing shifts. During its nearly three year operation, RTMC became the largest tonnage hard rock gold producer in the history of the region.<sup>129</sup>

Renewed placer mining activity occurred at Caribou Creek and Glacier Creek. The Carrington Company of Fairbanks leased claims from Billy Taylor, the famous climber who had actively mined antimony and previously tried hydraulic mining with the MMGPC outfit in the 1920s. Eight sites, four along Caribou Creek and four along Glacier Creek, were selected for a large scale dragline. From 1939 until 1941, the Carrington Company processed 3,000,000 bedrock feet of gravel through the washing plant. A crew of ten employees worked ten-hour day or night shifts and produced about 200 to 300 ounces of gold a week. The Carrington Company's dragline has been called the most successful gold mining venture in the District's history.<sup>130</sup> Taylor's Caribou Creek log cabin from this era survives (MMK-040; LCS 036519) as well as the Last Chance Creek Cabin (MMK-046; LCS 036522) and the ruin of the Last Chance Creek Shed (MMK-046A; LCS 036523).

Miner Ernest Maurer also operated a dragline on Caribou Creek in 1940 but in 1942 he moved his operation to Glacier Creek, including the dragline and a caterpillar bulldozer. Although most mining operations did not go past 1942, Maurer mined Glacier Creek until 1944 and produced about 2,000 troy ounces of gold in three seasons.<sup>131</sup> The physical evidence from this era at Glacier Creek includes the Glacier Creek Cabin ruin (MMK-055; LCS 036524), Shed (MMK-055A; LCS 036525), Dragline Bunkhouse (MMK-056; LCS 036526), and Dragline Bunkhouse Shed (MMK-056A; LCS 036527). The Glacier Creek sites are associated with Joe Quigley in addition to Maurer's operation.

Kantishna's improved disposition in the late 1930s was partly the result of President Roosevelt's decision to take the United States currency off of the gold standard. Kantishna's abrupt decline in 1942 also came in the form of President Roosevelt's signature. Federal Order L-208 forced the shutdown of all non-essential gold mines in the US. This brought most of the large-scale mining in Kantishna to a halt.<sup>132</sup> During the War years, longtime resident Joe Dalton passed away in his Kantishna cabin on December 2, 1943 and Fannie Quigley passed away on August 22, 1944.<sup>133</sup> Busia remained the only

<sup>129</sup> Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 157-158; Buzzell, "Drainage Histories," 16; Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 47.

<sup>130</sup> Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 158; Saleeby, "CRMIM," 169-170.

<sup>131</sup> Saleeby, "CRMIM," 170. Maurer also mined antimony from Slate Creek during World War II and assisted Mount McKinley National Park with removing snow drifts from the road.

<sup>132</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 335. Maurer continued to mine antimony and gold.

<sup>133</sup> Dalton was buried at the Eureka cemetery just south of the Kantishna Roadhouse. Sourdough veteran Pete Anderson was also interred at that location after his death in 1947. Evidence shows that at least five graves exist at the "Old Eureka town site." Fannie Quigley was buried at Birch Hill Cemetery in Fairbanks. See Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 235.

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year-round resident in the area and soon was referred to as the “mayor” of Kantishna.<sup>134</sup>

The Kantishna Mining District’s origins preceded Mount McKinley National Park’s establishment by over a decade; however, by 1917, the fate of the park and the mining district became forever intertwined. The Kantishna region was deliberately omitted from the original park boundary and the presence of miners in the area heavily influenced the language of the park bill. Over time, the concessions to miners in sections of the legislation became too onerous to reconcile because they countered the National Park Service’s overall mission of preservation and protection. Within a decade of the park’s establishment, provisions that originally intended to protect prospecting were abused and had to be eliminated. Over the course of the next century, mining was slowly eliminated from the original park boundaries and the Kantishna Hills were brought into the boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve after it expanded by nearly four million acres in 1980. The Kantishna District’s period of significance began in 1903 with the discovery of gold and witnessed two major revivals, but with the termination of major mining in 1942, the District was never significant again in terms of exploration and settlement, and mining industry history.

### Mining in the Kantishna Hills after World War II

With the end of the War and the recently completed park road, miners finally had much-improved access to Kantishna. Between 1943 and 1949, the NPS did not charge commercial mining companies for use of the park road. In 1950, the NPS charged a 20 dollar fee to two operations but had waived the fee by 1952, and did not charge thereafter.<sup>135</sup> Small air strips continued to be built throughout Kantishna and improved the ability of some operations to monitor conditions and bring in some supplies, but did not solve the movement of larger mechanized equipment.<sup>136</sup>

Another effort to obtain better access included the continued push for a Stampede road along the north side of the Kantishna Hills. The Stampede road endeavor at times found financial support but it always proved inadequate given the unfavorable environmental conditions for sustaining a road. As early as the 1920s, the ARC surveyed the possibilities of a “lower route” to Kantishna but never maintained a road after the decision to build the Park Road. Regardless of the Park Road’s advance, a trail and wagon road known as the “lower route” was in use. It moved west from the railroad stop at Lignite to the Toklat River. The route then followed the Clearwater Fork and Moose Creek to the gold camps of Kantishna.

Between the 1930s and 1970s multiple attempts were made to build or improve a road between the railroad and the Kantishna Hills along the “lower route.” One of the best attempts happened in the fall of 1936 when Earl Pilgrim bulldozed a road from the Stampede Mine to Lignite which became known as the “Stampede Trail.” Another effort happened in 1961 when Pilgrim worked with state officials and the pioneer road program. The state authorized \$250,000 to build a road from Lignite to Stampede but the

<sup>134</sup> Bryant, *Snapshots*, 167, 178; Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 335.

<sup>135</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 337.

<sup>136</sup> Besides the main Kantishna airstrip at Moose Creek, airstrips were built at Slate Creek, Glen Creek, and Stampede.

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Yutan Construction Company, who was awarded the contract, failed to build a sustainable route and exhausted the funds with little to show for it.<sup>137</sup>

Optimistic miners continued to arrive in the area by road, trail, or plane and sometimes were rewarded for their efforts though large fortunes remained elusive during the post-World War II period. Following the War, commercial mining operations resumed as the Carrington Company operated Caribou Mines along Caribou Creek from 1946 until 1949. Caribou Mines was operated by 14 employees and its equipment was sold to the Glacier Creek Mining Company in 1949.<sup>138</sup>

Between 1948 and 1967, small-scale placer gold mining operations existed throughout Kantishna. Some of these included Busia’s “shovel-in” placer mining on Moose Creek in the late 1940s; Elmer and D.G. Hosler’s operation on Eureka and Moose Creeks between 1948 and 1952; Arley Taylor’s operation at Eureka Creek from 1959 until the mid-1960s. In the late 1950s, Frank Bunnell mined the Neversweat lead-silver prospect on Eldorado Creek near the confluence with Reinhart Creek, while the early 1960s witnessed Henry Dyer and Slim Plackman’s small bulldozer operation on Friday Creek.<sup>139</sup>

Mining continued to define the Kantishna region during much of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but political, social, and economic changes started to alter its destiny. The Alaska Statehood Act and the burgeoning environmental movement of the 1960s had effects on the fate of the Kantishna. After Alaska became a state in 1959, the new government was charged with selecting 103,350,000 acres of unreserved federal land within 25 years.<sup>140</sup> The land selection process became intensified by the presence of environmental groups who were active in Alaska and concerned about environmental damage caused by mining in national parks.<sup>141</sup>

In addition to many political and social changes, a rise in tourism accompanied by improvements in travel and a growing American middle class became a major economic driver of Alaska’s economy.

***Kantishna Protective Withdrawal***

In the 1960s, a revived conservation ethic in the federal government along with pleas from wildlife biologist Adolph Murie, led to the withdrawal of 9,118 acres of Bureau of Land Management land north of the Wonder Lake area. Although the withdrawal was protested by Alaska’s Congressional delegation and mining interests and eventually shelved, the idea of a park expansion to encompass the Kantishna region was turning into a reality.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 159-160; Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 45-49. Other “lower route” efforts were explored in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, but were often thwarted by exorbitant costs.

<sup>138</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 335.

<sup>139</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 336-337; Bundtzen, “A History of Mining,” 159; Bryant, *Snapshots*, 174.

<sup>140</sup> Claus-M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 249

<sup>141</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 2*, 353.

<sup>142</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North, Vol. 1*, 178-181.



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*Camp Denali and the Beginning of Kantishna Lodges*

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the continuation of small mining operations but new business opportunities sought to capitalize on tourism dollars.

In 1951, Celia Hunter applied for a trade and manufacturing site with the Bureau of Land Management. Hunter had selected a bench above Moose Creek with her friends Ginny and Morton Wood and brainstormed plans to build a tourist lodge that provided a secluded wildness experience. By 1952 they built several wall tents and tent cabins and started receiving guests. Over 150 visitors came to their property that summer and the experience the Woods and Hunter provided proved to gain in popularity over the years. Within a few decades, the Kantishna region's identity began moving away from mining and towards accommodating visitors with the addition of several backcountry lodges.<sup>143</sup>

*1970s*

The fight over "national interest lands" brought the NPS and Alaska Planning Group to produce proposals which placed the Kantishna Hills within the expanded Mount McKinley National Park boundaries.<sup>144</sup>

While the complexities of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) were debated in the early 1970s, mining in Kantishna witnessed a revival largely due to the rise in gold and antimony prices as well as the ability to utilize modern machinery such as bulldozers and front-end loaders on gravels that were mined in the past.<sup>145</sup> The 1970s was one of the most active and productive periods in the area's history as commercial quantities of silver, gold, and antimony were being extracted.<sup>146</sup>

From 1970 to 1972 Leo Mark Anthony built an ore-processing mill at the Red Top claim to mine silver deposits. The claim was leased to the Craig family along with several other Quigley Ridge lode claims. Over 100 tons of ore were mined, milled, and shipped from Red Top.<sup>147</sup> During the same period, high prices for antimony brought renewed activity to Stampede, Slate Creek, and Last Chance Creek.<sup>148</sup>

In 1975, placer mining on Moose, Caribou, Eldorado, Eureka, Glacier, Glen, Spruce, and Yellow Creeks employed about 30 people and yielded 1,000 ounces of gold.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 1, 135-137.

<sup>144</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 353, 358; Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 1, 230. The Alaska Planning Group was an ad-hoc group formed by the Department of the Interior to resolve land management issues between the various agencies. They were charged with writing several environmental documents regarding the expansion of Mount McKinley National Park.

<sup>145</sup> Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 160.

<sup>146</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 363.

<sup>147</sup> Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 449; Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 160.

<sup>148</sup> Bundtzen, "A History of Mining," 160.

<sup>149</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 363.

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In 1976, the Mining in the Parks Act passed and changed mining regulations in national parks. Mineral entry was banned in Mount McKinley National Park and a four-year moratorium was instituted for surface disturbances. As a part of the new law, the Department of the Interior had study the validity of existing claims within the park. NPS geologists determined that none of the 74 claims within the park boundaries were valid (contained enough minerals to be profitable). Another requirement outlined by the Mining in the Parks Act was that owners of patented and unpatented claims needed to acquire annual mining plans of operations.<sup>150</sup>

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter was frustrated with Congress's inability to act on comprehensive Alaska lands legislation so he used his powers in the Antiquities Act to designate national monuments on 56 million acres within Alaska. 3,890,000 of the acres included land to the north, west, and south of Mount McKinley National Park. The Kantishna Hills area was one of the mineral extraction areas within the new Denali National Monument and miners in the area were subject to the Mining in the Parks Act of 1976. This meant that all operations had to obtain approval for their mining plans of operation each year and that the park needed to examine the validity of the claims in the region. Because the Kantishna Hills contained a large number claims, the Department of the Interior did not have the resources to conduct investigations and make determinations.<sup>151</sup>

### 1980s-Present

In 1980, passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) occurred during the final days of the Carter Administration. The act changed the name of Mount McKinley National Park to Denali National Park and Preserve and also expanded the park to include the Kantishna region. Although the passage of ANILCA changed the national park's relationship with the majority of Kantishna, it took several years for new regulations to affect the mining activity in the area. Following ANILCA, NPS officials were charged with enforcing provisions of the Mining in the Parks Act but in the short term did not have the resources to investigate the numerous mining claims of the Kantishna region. The NPS temporarily approved many of those submitting mining plans of operation until further validity assessment could be accomplished.<sup>152</sup>

In the early 1980s, while new laws and regulations placed the future of Kantishna mining in jeopardy, substantial extraction operations continued and in some cases tried to expand. A 1981 report revealed that Kantishna contained 150 recorded placer claims with another 51 under adjudication. Less than one-third of the placer claims were active. In addition, there were 126 recorded lode claims with less than one-tenth containing activity.<sup>153</sup> In 1981, Leonard Kragness and John Hayhurst founded the Kantishna Mining Company and by 1982 acquired fourteen placer mining claims on upper Caribou Creek. In their mining plan of operation they included the need to construct an access road between the Park Road and

<sup>150</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 355, 369.

<sup>151</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 362-363, 369.

<sup>152</sup> Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (2016 draft)," 136-139.

<sup>153</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 365-366.

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their claims. The Quigley Ridge Access Road already spanned the three mile distance between the Banjo Mill Site and mile 91.5 of the Park Road.<sup>154</sup> In June of 1983, Skyline Drive was built to connect Banjo Mill to a tractor road near the confluence of Last Chance and Caribou Creeks. Skyline Drive covered over nine miles between Banjo Mill and claims at Caribou Creek.<sup>155</sup> Although Skyline greatly improved access to numerous claims, new regulations and a federal injunction deterred some prospectors and miners from entering or continuing work in the area.

In May 1985, the Sierra Club, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, and the Denali Citizens Council filed a lawsuit to cease mining operations on unpatented claims within Alaska national park units. The plaintiffs asserted that environmental assessments of mining impacts were not being conducted. On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, District Court Judge James A. von der Heydt issued an injunction halting mining operations in seven Alaska park units until proper environmental studies required by the Mining in the Parks Act were completed. Additionally, the judge disallowed future mining in three park units—Wrangell St. Elias, Yukon Charley, and Denali.<sup>156</sup>

The majority of miners in the Kantishna region finished work in the 1985 season and waited for the NPS to make determinations. Some miners ignored the injunction and continued operations illegally; at least one claimant continued submitting a plan of operation, but ultimately mining activity was discontinued by the NPS for the rest of the 1980s until an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the cumulative impacts of mining in Kantishna was completed.<sup>157</sup> In 1990, the NPS weighed several options proposed in the Kantishna EIS. After reviewing public comments the NPS and Regional Director Boyd Evison decided to move forward with a mining claim acquisition plan so that the Denali National Park could obtain all patented and valid unpatented mining claims in the park and preserve. Since the decision, the park has been gradually purchasing claims although several private inholders have held on to their claims without intention to sell.<sup>158</sup>

During the 1990s and 2000s the Park Service invested considerable time and money performing reclamation projects throughout the Kantishna Hills. In 2016, for the first time in nearly 30 years, miners resumed operating in Kantishna on Eldorado Creek after successfully submitting a suitable mining plan of operation on valid patented mining claims.<sup>159</sup>

### *Kantishna's Changing Landscape*

Mining in the Kantishna came under threat in the 1960s and 1970s due to a series of laws involving park

<sup>154</sup> The Quigley Ridge Access Road probably was originally developed by the Quigleys as a trail between 1910 and 1918. A road was built when Quigley leased his claims in the 1920s and was improved again between 1936 and 1942 when the Red Top Mining Company operated the Banjo Mill. Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (2016 draft)," 496-497.

<sup>155</sup> Layton and Foulds, "Cultural Landscape Report (draft)," 330; Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 370.

<sup>156</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 371-372; Saleeby, "CRMIM," 7.

<sup>157</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 372-373.

<sup>158</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 373.

<sup>159</sup> Sam Friedman, "Denali Park considers last unpatented mining claim," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 7, 2016.

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expansion to include the Kantishna Hills. As early as 1952, Camp Denali started operating as a lodge and inadvertently began the process of changing Kantishna's identity. In 1973, Gary Crabb built the North Face Lodge just to the west of Camp Denali near Moose Creek and it was eventually acquired by Camp Denali in 1987. An inholding near the northeast confluence of Eureka Creek and Moose Creek was owned by Roberta Wilson and Dan Ashbrook and by the 1980s it was converted into a series of cabins, a bar, dining room, and library. The property became the Kantishna Roadhouse lodge which and shares the name of the historic 1919 Roadhouse building that sits adjacent to the newer tourist facilities.<sup>160</sup>

In 1989, Gary and Danae Kroll opened the Denali Mountain Lodge on the east side of Moose Creek near the Kantishna Airstrip. The Property is now called the Denali Backcountry Lodge. The fifth tourist lodge that operates in Kantishna is the Skyline Lodge operated by Kantishna Air Taxi and located on the west side of the Park Road near mile 92.<sup>161</sup>

### Conclusion

The historic Kantishna Mining District contains valuable historical evidence of activities that were an integral part of the region's exploration, industry, and social history. Log cabins, abandoned mills, historic trails, tailings piles, adits, pits, ditches, ruins, cairns, abandoned equipment, and abandoned settlements are some of the physical resources that contribute to the fabric of the district. Buildings and structures stand as monuments to some people who forever affected the region and their names are associated with the area's geography. Quigley Ridge, Busia Mountain, McGonagall Gulch, and Brooker Mountain are reminders of the mining district's impact. The Kantishna region's history is marked by the booms and busts associated with the price of minerals and also the continued difficulty of establishing industry and settlements in a region consistently hindered by access. Nevertheless, the historic mining resources of the Kantishna Mining District remain as an example of the pioneering spirit, tenacity, and hardships endured by those miners and prospectors who exercised great risk by entering and exploring remote lands.

<sup>160</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 375.

<sup>161</sup> Norris, *Crown Jewel of the North*, Vol. 2, 376

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**F. Associated Property Types**

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

Properties being considered in this submission are within the boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve and are associated with three areas of significance under National Register Criterion A: 1) exploration and settlement 2) social history and 3) the industry. Properties may also be significant under Criterion B, association with locally important persons, or Criterion D, potential for recovery of scientific data. The Kantishna Mining District resources within Denali contain numerous buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts associated with mineral development.

Mining property types in Kantishna demonstrate the historical existence of mineral extraction and beneficiation. Representations of mineral extraction include prospect holes, adits, pits, stopes, tailings, dams, ditches, sluice boxes, hydraulic nozzles, flumes, transportation systems, cairns, worker housing and associated outbuildings, tent frames, and administrative offices. Representations of beneficiation include mills and supporting buildings and structures.

In addition, settlements developed in response to increased mining activity during the period of significance. The settlements built around the mining booms mostly vanished but contain deteriorating buildings and structures or ruins along with historic archaeology sites. Evidence of mining equipment is still present and at least one known cemetery exists.

As is explicitly stated in *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering Historic Mining Sites (NR Bulletin 42)*: “The passage of time, exposure to harsh environment, abandonment, vandalism, and neglect often combine to cause the deterioration of individual mining property components.” Often when deterioration is present, it is necessary to identify many components of a property to convey the historical significance of a mining operation. The buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts identified by and/or related to the *Historic Mining Resources of Denali National Park and Preserve MPDF* are connected to historical trends in exploration and settlement, social history, and industry that affected the Kantishna region between 1903 and 1942. Scattered and deteriorating mining resources must be understood within the Kantishna Mining District’s larger historic context.

For Kantishna mining properties to be eligible for the National Register, they must retain historic integrity with an evaluation of their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

1. **Location** of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts has not changed. Cabins and their associated structures, tailings piles, circulation routes, adits, cairns, mining equipment, ditches, and dams associated with exploration and settlement, social history, and industry have not moved and retain integrity of location.
2. **Design** related to exploration and settlement and industry depended on creeks and topographic

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ridges. Mining sites were determined by the geological features that lent themselves to extraction including creeks for placer mining and ridges and exposed rock faces for lode mining. Existing buildings constructed for purposes of mining must convey the styles used by miners to carry out their mission in remote Interior Alaska.

3. The Kantishna Mining District **setting** includes topography, water features, and vegetation. Mining sites developed based on the discovery of minerals, and the miners used the land to assist in their operations. The setting has changed along Moose Creek with the development of tourist lodges, but most of the sites in the Kantishna Hills remain remote and have not been affected by new development.
4. Original **materials** that survive at the historic mining sites include logs used to build cabins, tailings from excavation, steel pipe, moss chinking, corrugated metal sheathing, and gravel-surfaced roads.
5. **Workmanship** can be observed in buildings and structures featuring round or hewn logs connected with notched and lapped joints. Moss chinking is evidence of local materials used in a remote area with a shortage of building materials. Hand-stacked tailings, retaining walls, and cairns from the historic period are present throughout the Kantishna Hills. Workmanship is also revealed through the benching process seen on the hillsides.
6. The Kantishna Mining District retains **feeling** by remaining a remote outpost defined by its topography which lent itself to mineral extraction. Contemporary tourist lodge development has affected sites along Moose Creek, but the majority of the feeling associated with the area remains unchanged.
7. Mining resources from the historic period associated with exploration and settlement, social history, and industry are scattered and observed throughout the Kantishna Hills. The mining resources retain **association** with the period of significance and historic themes.

Denali National Park and Preserve contains buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts associated with mining activity that retain historic integrity and are connected to the themes of exploration and settlement, industry, and social history between 1903 and 1942.

### Mining-related Buildings

#### Description

Most of the buildings constructed in the Kantishna area were built to support mining operations. Smaller buildings included cabin dwellings and bunkhouses; almost all of the extant buildings in the Kantishna

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region are small, one-room cabins in deteriorating condition. A typical cabin from the 1920s period is at least 12 feet long by 8 or 9 feet wide and constructed out of milled lumber or hewn spruce logs; gabled-roofs are standard. Saddle-notching of the logs in the corner is common. Cabins from later in the period of significance are often larger but made of the same materials.

Larger operations included employee homes and buildings constructed for commercial and entertainment value. In Kantishna, this included offices and roadhouses. Roadhouses were popular meeting places for miners to eat, sleep, and learn about contemporary events. Traditional roadhouses are no longer remaining in the Kantishna region even though several existed. The Kantishna Roadhouse is the only extant "roadhouse" but it did not typically function as a roadhouse nor was it originally built with the intention of being a roadhouse. It is an example of a two-story log dwelling. Some mining camps also included outbuildings like sheds, caches, dog houses, and outhouses. Kantishna's later mining development included cookhouses, blacksmith shops, and mill complexes. A residence built by the Red Top Mining Company in the late 1930s at the airstrip was larger than other living quarters in the region and was more extravagant in design, materials, and workmanship than the log cabins built earlier in the exploration and mineral development period.

### **Significance**

Some of the buildings in the Kantishna Mining District are significant for their association with important events related to the mining industry, exploration and settlement, and social history. Other buildings may be significant due to their relationship with prominent local miner residents like Joe and Fannie Quigley, Johnnie Busia, Billy Taylor, and Charles McGonagall.

### **Registration Requirements**

Buildings that were constructed during the period of significance, retain historic integrity, and are associated with events related to exploration and settlement, mining, and social history are locally significant and eligible for the National Register under Criterion A. Certain buildings connected to locally prominent miners and residents like Joe and Fannie Quigley, Johnnie Busia, Billy Taylor, and Charles McGonagall are eligible under Criterion B.

### **Mining-related Structures**

#### **Description**

Kantishna mining structures are related to placer or lode mining and are associated with extraction, circulation, and exploration. They are significant for their connection to the mining industry during the historic period. Adits and shafts, tailings, hydraulic ditches, dams, scows, cairns and prospect pits represent mining extraction. Roads, trails, and airstrips represent circulation and exploration.

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**Significance**

Some structures are locally significant for their direct association with exploration and settlement of the Kantishna region and their connection to the mining industry. Others contain significance due to their association with locally important miners and prospectors like Joe and Fannie Quigley, Joe Dalton, Tom Lloyd, Billy Taylor, Charles McGonagall, Pete Anderson, Edgar Brooker, or Johnnie Busia.

**Registration Requirements**

Structures built during the period of significance and related to the mining industry, exploration and settlement of the Kantishna Mining District, and/or the social history of the District are eligible at the local level for the National Register under Criterion A. The structures eligible under these criteria demonstrate strong elements of the seven aspects of integrity as mining properties and include historic documentation. In addition, certain structures connected to locally important miners that contribute to the understanding of mining operations during the historic period are eligible under Criteria B. Locally significant miners include Joe and Fannie Quigley, Johnnie Busia, Billy Taylor, Tom Lloyd, Pete Anderson, Charles McGonagall, Joe Dalton, Peter Nelson, Margaret Hunter, Dewey Burnett, Earl Pilgrim, Charles Trundy, and Edgar Brooker.

**Mining-Related Sites**

**Description**

Sites are locations where significant events and/or historic occupation or activities take place. They can be locations of deteriorated, ruined buildings or structures where the place contains historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the integrity of the built environment. Historic sites in the Kantishna region contribute to the historic mining landscape and often are the only remaining evidence of mining activity, exploration and settlement, and the social history of the Kantishna Mining District. Sites often contain building ruins or a cemetery significant for association with locally significant individuals. Due to the fleeting nature of mining booms, often buildings and structures were hastily constructed and not able to endure environmental elements over time. In a remote area with limited resources, many buildings and structures were moved to different locations and reused or repurposed.

**Significance**

Sites in the Kantishna region are locally significant for their association with exploration and settlement patterns and their relationship to the historic mining activity that took place during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some sites are important for their connection to locally significant individuals. Some sites may contain critical information regarding the lives of miners and more archaeological investigation is necessary to understand early 20<sup>th</sup> century mining at a remote Interior Alaska outpost.

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**Registration Requirements**

Sites that date to the historic mining period (1903-1942), retain elements of historic integrity, and are related to the exploration and settlement, mining industry, and social history of the Kantishna Mining District are locally eligible for the National Register under Criterion A. Sites include dwelling ruins, mining operation ruins, and town site ruins.

Some mining sites from the historic period that retain integrity are also eligible under Criterion B for their association with locally significant individuals like the Quigleys, Joe Dalton, Johnnie Busia, Billy Taylor, Tom Lloyd, Pete Anderson, Charles McGonagall, Peter Nelson, Margaret Hunter, Dewey Burnett, Earl Pilgrim, Charles Trundy, and Edgar Brooker.

Sites related to mining are also eligible under Criterion D for potential to yield important historical information. Further investigation into sites could uncover new information about social data related to material culture, consumption, and customs of miners working in remote areas during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mining-related Districts**

**Description**

A mining district will contain a concentration or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, and/or objects that are connected historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. In the Kantishna Mining District, often, placer mining operations spread out along a water drainage feature. Lode mining operations sometimes occurred throughout a large space along a ridge. Both types of mineral extraction sometimes included multiple buildings, structures, and objects that together help understand the overall mining operation.

**Significance**

Districts in the Kantishna region are significant for their association with exploration and settlement patterns and their relationship to the historic mining activity that took place during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some are also important for their connection to locally significant individuals.

**Registration Requirements**

The Kantishna Hills region is a large geographic region and individual historic districts of resources often developed within individual creek drainages or along ridges that contained substantial mineral lodes. Eligible districts must be from the historic period (1903-1942), retain integrity, and be connected to the areas of significance including exploration and settlement, mining industry, and/or social history.

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Some mining historic districts within the Kantishna Hills are also eligible for the National Register under Criterion B for their association with locally significant individuals like Joe and Fannie Quigley, Joe Dalton, Johnnie Busia, Billy Taylor, Charles McGonagall, Margaret Hunter, Dewey Burnett, Earl Pilgrim, Charles Trundy, and Edgar Brooker

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**G. Geographical Data**

*Kantishna Historic Mining Resources of Denali National Park and Preserve, AK* includes historically significant properties located within the boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve, situated in Alaska's Denali Borough.

Most of the resources are located approximately 90 to 130 miles southwest of Fairbanks in the northern foothills of the Alaska Range. The area encompasses roughly 50,000 acres and its boundaries are the Toklat River to the east, the Kantishna River to the west, Wonder Lake to the south, and the confluence of the Bearpaw and Kantishna Rivers to the north.

The Kantishna Hills is known for its coarse, angular gold, as well as for its quartz-carbonate-sulfide veins containing gold, silver, lead, and antimony deposits. The area encompassing the Kantishna Mining District includes most of the tributaries that flow into the Kantishna River; this includes Caribou, Eldorado, Eureka, Friday, Glacier, Glen, Little Moose, Moose, Myrtle, Rainy, Slate, Spruce, and Willow Creeks where significant placer deposits attracted prospectors. The lode deposits are located along a 34 mile belt that extends from Slate Creek to Stampede Creek. The boundaries of the historic mining district are within the boundaries of the national park.

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### H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) follows guidelines provided by *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete a National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (NR Bulletin 16B) and *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering Historic Mining Sites* (NR Bulletin 42). The MPDF draws on cumulative Kantishna cultural resource management documentation from the last 25 years. This includes: *Old Eureka/Kantishna Historic Mining Determination of Eligibility* (1993), *Old Eureka/Kantishna Historic Mining District National Register Draft* (2008), *The Quest for Gold: An Overview of the National Park Service Cultural Resources Mining Inventory and Monitoring Program (CRMIM)*, *Cultural Landscape Report for the Kantishna/Wonder Lake Area Draft* (2012 and 2016), and Cultural Landscape Inventory documentation for the Fannie Quigley Residence, the Busia Cabin, the Kantishna Hydraulic Ditch, and the Neversweat Prospect. All documentation contributed to the assessment of mining resources within the Kantishna region and helped formulate the periods of significance useful for the historic context. In addition, recent condition assessments performed for Denali National Park's List of Classified Structures by architectural historians and historic architects along with 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 site visits by historians and archeologists, contributed to evaluation and documentation of resources.

In drafting the historic context, the contributing cultural resource specialists built on previous historic contexts established in the 1993 Determination of Eligibility (DOE), as well as the 2008 National Register Nomination Draft and the 2012 and 2016 Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) drafts. They performed archival research and consulted Denali cultural resource site files. Multiple Alaska newspaper reports on Kantishna mining from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were accessed and integrated into the context. In addition, histories of mining in Alaska were used. United States Geological Survey (USGS) reports and Territory of Alaska mine inspection reports from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are critical to understanding Kantishna's early history. The periods of significance and significant dates were selected by reviewing previous National Register drafts, consulting subject matter experts, and by producing a comprehensive chronology of events in Kantishna which indicated years with significant changes and/or occurrences.

Property types selected for inclusion demonstrated historic value and integrity as outlined in NR Bulletin 42. They contribute to the mining district that was present during the periods of significance.

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Name of Property

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County and State

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N/A

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*Fairbanks Weekly News*

*Fairbanks Weekly Times*

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| County and State   |
| Historic Mining Resources of Denali National Park & Preserve |
| Name of multiple listing (if applicable)                     |

- Nenana Daily News*
- Northern Lights*
- Nome Nugget*
- Rampart Alaska Forum*
- Seward Gateway*
- Tanana Daily Miner*
- Tanana Semi-Weekly Miner*
- Tanana Tribune*
- Tanana Teller (Chena)*
- Valdez News*
- Yukon Press (Tanana)*
- Yukon Valley N. (Rampart)*
- Yukon World (Dawson)*

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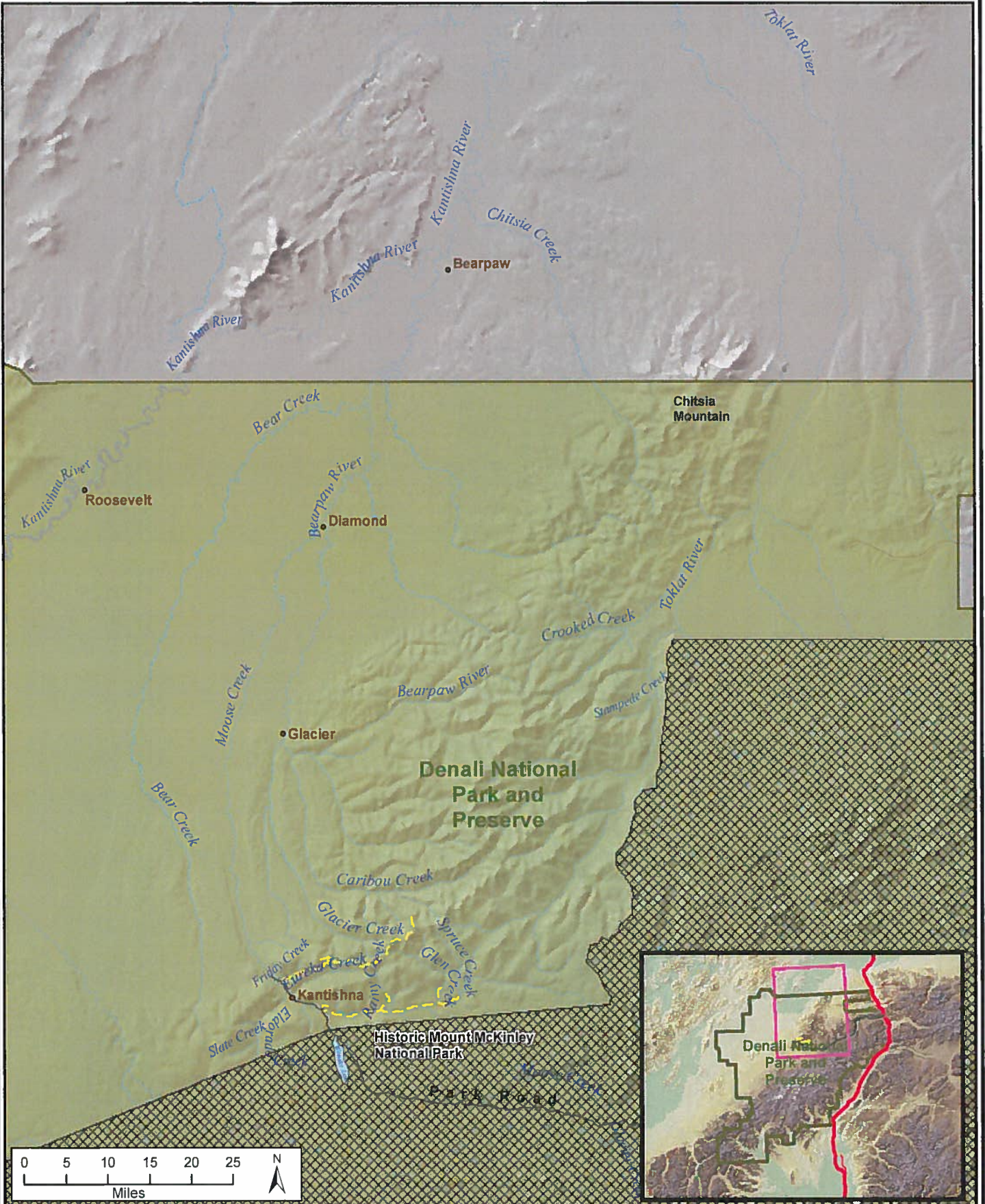
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# Kantishna Hills Area

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# Kantishna Area

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