

MAR 20110018: LOST LEMON MINE

Lost Lemon Mine - A report on the Lost Lemon Mine, southwest Alberta.

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ALBERTA ENERGY,
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REPORT OF RECORD

Part B

And

Part C

Assessment Report

Metallic and Industrial mineral Permit #9309110280

The Lost Lemon Mine Project

Robert R. Losie

Submitted by

Report Author

Robert R. Losie

November 25, 2011

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Part B Technical Report

SUMMARY:

This project can be characterized as an attempt to preserve a Historical Resource for Alberta and specific Shareholder groups. We have found small amounts of gold, copper, Galena and Silver in Speer's Creek.

A group of individuals, have dedicated countless volunteer hours to the project. This Project has been sanctified by the Blackfoot Confederacy. According to Blackfoot elders testimony the original location featured hot springs and served as a recreational gathering location. According to Blackfoot Oral Tradition, between 1910 -1915, "Whiteman" came and covered the location by burying an entire canyon system to "Cover UP" the location of "Lost Lemmon Mine". First Nation Elders have confirmed the existence of a gold nugget the size of a man's fist.

On August 5, 2005, Robert Murray Alexander Scott discovered the first finding while panning an area that had been profoundly disturbed by erosion, in the exposed roots of a tree. This area is known as "Ground Zero"

Once the discovery of the area had been made we conducted countless day trips and in total about twenty people have participated in the exploration of the area. Upon discovering slight color changes in the surface color of a specific area, we were able to determine, using Google earth that a particular canyon within the bowl of Speer's Creek and had no streams, flowing into the main body of Speer's Creek. At first this was a complete mystery, so we had to make an additional two Expeditions, after careful conclusion we discovered that there was a solid band of mossy, white flowered and tree blown areas that appear as if someone has filled in the bulk of the canyon floor. The amount of water that has accumulated in these areas is very distinct. These filled in canyons generally characterized as having an aquifer underneath the surface of the surface which has solid rock on either side of this continuous band of moss.

The significance of this is on the valley floor we found significant fluvial potholes which lead us to conclude that these creeks, were related to the 100 year flood Of 2005. We had dedicated an entire expedition to find any trace of the two branches on a small stream (Named Speer's 1) that contacted to the main body and found a dam to divert the river and a giant levy type system to trap water to trap water and have it filter underneath the canopy of the surface of the forest, where the base rock consists of volcanic Rock and quartz and calcite. (See Photographs) The system is constructed using conglomerate rock removed from Speer's 5 and moved by truck down to a specific location known as Area 51. Area 51 is a large flat valley area, which has been covered by a canopy of forest and contains the area where the Canyon was "filled in". At the Base of this large levy, the area known as "Leoville" was discovered. The right foundation for the levy comes from a peak of iron rock, known as the "Iron Rock". Just beyond the iron rock is the Calcite Dyke. Beyond this, we have found hot springs which met our theory about having active volcanism.

Directly South of this area (Speer's 1) marks the beginning of the Freehold Area, which to date, has no record of when or by whom the claim was made. The Iron Rock was claimed by an American Mining

Company in 1910. To date no records were found at the Glenbow museum, other searches revealed that the freehold area had been given to a trust company over half a decade ago.

The area contains a road bed that was constructed for heavy truck use and runs in a northwest direction of about two Kilometers from the (940 Highway) this road continues crosses the river and then travels to a point in the middle of the bowl of Speer's creek. We have found a dam where the creek was diverted. Parallel to the highway 940 there is a 3600" Airstrip that the Department of Transportation of the Government of Canada has no record of when, who or why the airstrip was built.

We do not know if the area has been previously mined, or just covered up. We would like the opportunity to find out. The configuration of #9309110280 was designed to surround the Freehold land. Our assumption is that this Freehold area holds the key to finding the horizontal quartz shelf. Since we have no intent on actually mining the resource as we believe it should be shared by all Albertans, we would ask that the customary fee's/per acre be waved for the 14 year period so we can investigate the possibility, without causing any environmental damage to the stream or area. The majority of the lodging for the interested parties would be staying at Blackfoot Crossing and then heading up to the claim. Currently the area is being used by recreationalists on the main roadways of the area for ATV use.

INTRODUCTION:

Most of the story of "The Lost Lemmon Mine" has not been told. The area of "9309110280" is greater than the value of gold as it appears and that the area has a greater spiritual value. After finding the first samples of silver, copper, galena and gold at "Ground Zero" on Aug. 5/ 2005, I started making inquiries with the Blackfoot Nation. My success in dealing with the First Peoples stems from my introduction to Blackfoot elders. As I met more people who saw the importance of this find to their community, they started to discuss aspects of the story which no "white man" has heard to this day. The story has been encapsulated in a series of songs which form the basis their oral tradition and would be regarded as epic poetry the forerunner to the modern novel. The format does not negate the validity of the information given; it is in a simpler form, congruent with the First Peoples culture.

These songs have endured; however, the information pertaining to the whereabouts of the gold was lost due to the keeping of the secret. Crowfoot forbade anyone to discuss any of the details of the story or to travel in the area, on pain of death. In all of the information on the events of 1869, the "Curse of Bearspaw" is a constant theme. Riley refers to it as the "Wrath of Wahcondah". This curse has claimed many lives in the form of retribution and genuine unexplained events.

The silence of the First People in this matter is greater than the threat of death; it deals with the sacrifice of a people with respect to the area itself. Crowfoot had to close a popular pass to keep the area safe, adding inconvenience to their lives. When discussing details of the story with the elders of the Blackfoot nation, one element had a significant impact on our search - the revelation of the hot springs. It appears, with confirmations from three different elders, that the area was a recreational area prized for the hot springs with its social, spiritual and cultural life. The gold was of little or no value in the sense of material gain. Gold was revered for the reflective properties and reminded the First People of their relationship to the sun. Sun worshipping goes back to the earliest roots of civilization and is congruent with the time

line for the migration of people across the Bering Sea. The location of the area where the gold was found may represent a larger spiritual venue or special meeting place. The lament of the Blackfoot songs is not for the lost gold but for the lost area and its spiritual significance.

The Discovery of the Location of the Mine

The revelation about the Hot Springs was one of the keys in determining that we had, in fact, found the area of the gold. When we originally started out, there were many questions to answer. We asked ourselves how gold could be in an area for 150 years and not give up any placer deposits (a place on a stream, where erosion has caused the gold to travel downstream and collect under rocks and the like), which we would have been discovered while panning in the area. In this case, the conditions for the creation of gold would have been different from those in other areas where gold was to be found.

To appreciate this, one must consider how gold is formed. In our case, the Hydrothermal Vent Theory is based on the following premise: Three billion years ago the earth was a giant ball of molten ooze. A small non-descript volcano (now called Crowsnest Mountain) erupted with such fury that a large area was affected by the blast. During the eruption, molten quartz, laden with precious metals, was dredged from the mantle and, under tremendous pressure and heat, was forced through the cracks and fissures. This quartz would have traveled over long distances (100 miles) and may have been responsible for the metals found at Kimberly and Fort Steele. These veins of gold are contained in the rock (ore) and are followed when digging into the earth. In our case, the quartz contains small spheres of gold which would be reminiscent of shot gun shot. Like diamonds, these veins (pipes) of quartz may look like a bush or cactus with the stem coming out of the center of the earth.

It was our contention that the gold was formed by superheated steam with aqueous solutions of precious metals contained therein. As the steam cooled, the quartz and metals would precipitate out of solution and cling to the walls of the rocks and fissures. For our theory to work, we had to look for active volcanism. The reason why no gold was found downstream was twofold. The nature of the vertical vent would have made it difficult for the heavy gold to fight gravity and find its way out of the vent. The second, which we did not bargain for, was human intervention.

During my discussion with the Blackfoot Elders, the second revelation about the Hot Springs was that the area had, in fact, been covered over. The hot springs were dammed to hide the location. The specific date of this action was said to have been between 1910 and 1915. Dan Riley was a Major of High River at the time and the only explanation for this action was at this particular time, was the advent of a new invention, the airplane, which allowed the opportunity for aerial views of the area. During this period of time, the inter Provincial Boundary commission was starting its surveying and the building of forestry roads had begun. The road building equipment was in the area, interestingly enough, the Interprovincial Boundary commission had finished naming all but one of the mountains before 1918, in 1922 Mt. O'Rourke was named in 1922, four years after. In 1922 Dan Riley was named to the Senate in Ottawa.

It is difficult to imagine what the area looked like in 1869 but we can make the following assumptions after being in the area and seeing what we saw. We believe the area which has a size of 2 or 3 football fields by 2 or 3 football fields. It is a large flat area with two distinct areas or steps. The first or lower

area is black volcanic rock the second would be the horizontal quartz shelf. As described by the story, it is hard to imagine what this would look like. I would suggest that it would appear like a large ice skating rink in the middle of a forest. The brilliance and size of the white shelf would have attracted attention; anyone in a new airplane would have spotted it. What followed was, as it was described to me, a literal cover up. They covered the white quartz sheet with surrounding rocks and obscured the quartz shelf from view. They also diverted the stream to the outside of the valley, leaving a dry creek bed (six feet deep) running through the middle of the area parallel to the existing stream. Without this knowledge of having human intervention, we would not have been able to figure out what had happened. Another significant factor in our search was the 2005 flood itself; we were fortunate to be out panning just after the flooding and this is when we found our placer gold.

It was on our second expedition in 2008 that we came to the realization that the stream would have to have run perpendicular to the horizontal quartz shelf. When we explored the area, we found many irregularities in the terrain and in our physical and mental states. We believe that we were exposed to CO₂, which is associated with volcanism. On the third expedition of 2008, water, warm to the touch, was found up stream of the area known as "Last Look" which forms the "Calcite Dyke".

During the flood of 2005, the water was so high that the protective layer of overburden was disturbed. After the "cover-up" was completed, the area was most likely planted with trees. Over the years, this area has grown with the trees and has taken on the appearance of a regular forest. Members of our team have suggested the size of the trees in the area are smaller in diameter than other old growth trees. The area was affected by the flood, which created fluvial potholes. These potholes were created when the flood jumped the existing altered stream bed and flowed down the original course of the stream. As the water flooded down the valley, the material under the canopy of the forest roots was washed away leaving a honeycomb of passages under the forest floor. These caves or passages are large enough to support a person crawling inside them. If one were to imagine, being able to remove the entire layer of overburden and forest, which was placed on the actual surface of the stream bed, it would look similar to Livingston Falls (Volcanic Rock).

We have been consistently able to pan gold out of the stream, it is very small in nature and we have no idea of what the actual makeup of the gold is. Our intention is to develop a tourist based sustainable economic activity with the Treaty Seven Nations to develop the claim to reflect the spiritual nature had historical significance to the Blackfoot Confederacy and the other First Peoples of the area.

Part C

Note: The Reading of the Stories will put the images into context; go to www.thelemonproject.ca

Appendix for Illustrations:

1. Aug. 23, 2008: Expedition: Photo taken of what is the horizontal quartz shelf, where the gold is contained or was once located.
2. The route that a “Whiteman” would travel up to Edmonton skirting Blackfoot Land, from Fort Benton, Montana in 1869.
3. The route that a “Whiteman” would travel up to Edmonton skirting Blackfoot Land, from Fort Benton, Montana in 1869. (Alberta Detail)
4. The route that George Dawson took during his 1883 – 1884, mapping expedition, which created a map, named the “Eau Claire Collection”: Timber Tract Map, which was first published in the First Canadian Geological Survey in 1886.
5. Oldman (North Fork) and Speer’s Creek Map.
6. Topographical Map of the Cabin Range.
7. Topographical Map of the Cabin Range (Detailed).
8. Topographical Map of the Cabin Range (Labeled)
9. Map of Freehold land which has no record of being registered, or who registered it.
10. Alberta Government Mining and Mineral Interactive Map (Copy).
11. Google Earth; Overview Map – Labeled Map of Speer’s Creek.

12. Google Earth; Overview Map – Gravel Pit beside Highway #940.
13. Google Earth; Overview Map – Area Landmarks
14. Google Earth; Overview Map – Area Landmarks (Detail)
15. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View of Speer's Creek.
Use the "Gravel Pit" and Highway #940 as Reference. This area includes a 3600 'Airstrip which according to Transport Canada there is no record of who built it, when it was built and how much it would have cost? ("Hiding in Plain Sight)
16. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: - Speer's Creek Bowl: The Creeks are numbered from south and rotate west to north with each valley being a watershed which flow directly in to the Main Body of Speer's Creek (Speer's 3). (With the exception of Speer's #1) The Claimed area directly north of the "Freehold Area" (Speer's 1) contains the area of the alleged reclamation/"Cover Up" area. This "Cover Up" Area is known as "Area 51". This area appears to be the base of the alleged Canyon which heads upstream about two kilometers in length. The base of the canyon is divided by a calcite dyke at the area called "Lastlook". The signs of volcanism have been found west of "Lastlook", warm water to the touch has been found in the area east of what is known as the "Logjam"(Refer: #8). The fill for the covering of the "Mystery Canyon" come from which was once a large cliff (Speer's 5) of conglomerate rock which was trucked up to the "Mystery Canyon" and where a "Berm" was constructed, at the base of the "Berm" is a road known as "Riley's Road".
17. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: - Speer's Creek – This map shows the tracks of lighter green bands of forest which are clearly discernible. (Check it out for real on Google Earth.) We believe that these areas represent where the original stream bed lay. The color distinction is based on the fact that only moss and white flowers will only grow on the areas due to the fact it is so moist that trees will only grow to

one or two inch diameters. These bands which travel up to the base of "Mystery Canyon".

18. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: - Speer's Creek – This map shows the tracks of lighter green bands of forest(Detail)
19. Photograph of "Ground Zero"; Location of first find of Galena, Copper, Silver and Gold, by Robert Murray Alexander Scott, on August 5, 2005.
20. West End of the area known as "Leoville" which is a small section of material directly at the base of the "Berm". This overburden suffered greatly during the flood of 2005.
21. East view of "Leoville"
22. Erosion of "Area 51"
23. After the flood (2006 Expeditions, these areas were destroyed and erosion was very pronounced. The Fluvial Potholes were everywhere; we documented many on the Speer's Creek side (Area 51). There were many heading in a southerly direction, however these were not investigated. After a few years the scars of the 2005 disappeared and the Fluvial Potholes are now moss covered sunken pits.
24. Fluvial Pothole #2.
25. The "Pile of Rocks" was visually distinct in being created by man, it served as a reference point for the dry stream bed which ran through the area from "Area 51" to "Lastlook".
26. The "Pile of Rocks" was disinterred however, nothing but a deep hollow was found.
27. Area covering up the volcanic rock in "Area 51".

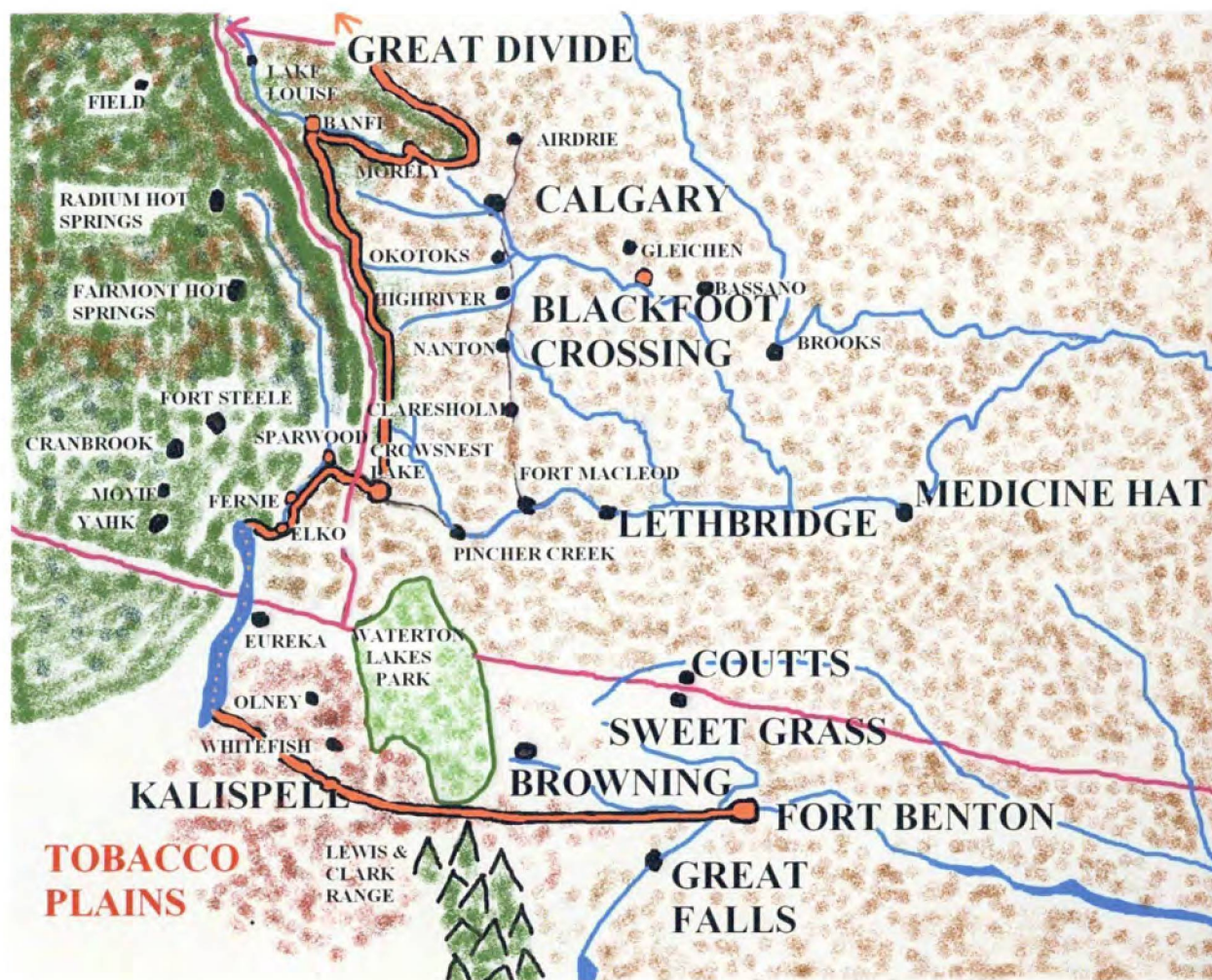
28. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: “Area 51”
29. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: “Mystery Creeks and Mystery Canyon.
30. “Last Look” The Calcite dyke that separates the two alleged “Covered Up” sections.
31. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: “Area 51” (Detailed View)
32. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: “High Points of Rock” are the peaks of the “Iron Rock” by which the “Berm” was anchored to the “Iron Rock” and at the base of the “Iron Rock”; Speer’s Creek was diverted by a small dam which rerouted the stream away from the “Berm”.
33. Footprint of the boggy, water saturated area known as “Mystery Creek #2”. This large area empties underneath of “Leoville”, without having an active stream bed, or any visible sign of drainage with the exception of the Fluvial Potholes (now Moss covered)
34. Image of what the discolored band which travels to the bottom of the “Mystery Canyon” looks like. The white Flowers and lack of mature trees cause the color change which is clearly discernible on Goggle Earth.
35. Google Earth; Overview Map – Note: Southern View: “Green Band Area”; note all of the trees have fallen the same direction which is directly opposite to the prevailing wind.
36. Image of the edge of the “Covered Up” band and the edge of what was once the natural rock located at the side, and the top of the stream bed.

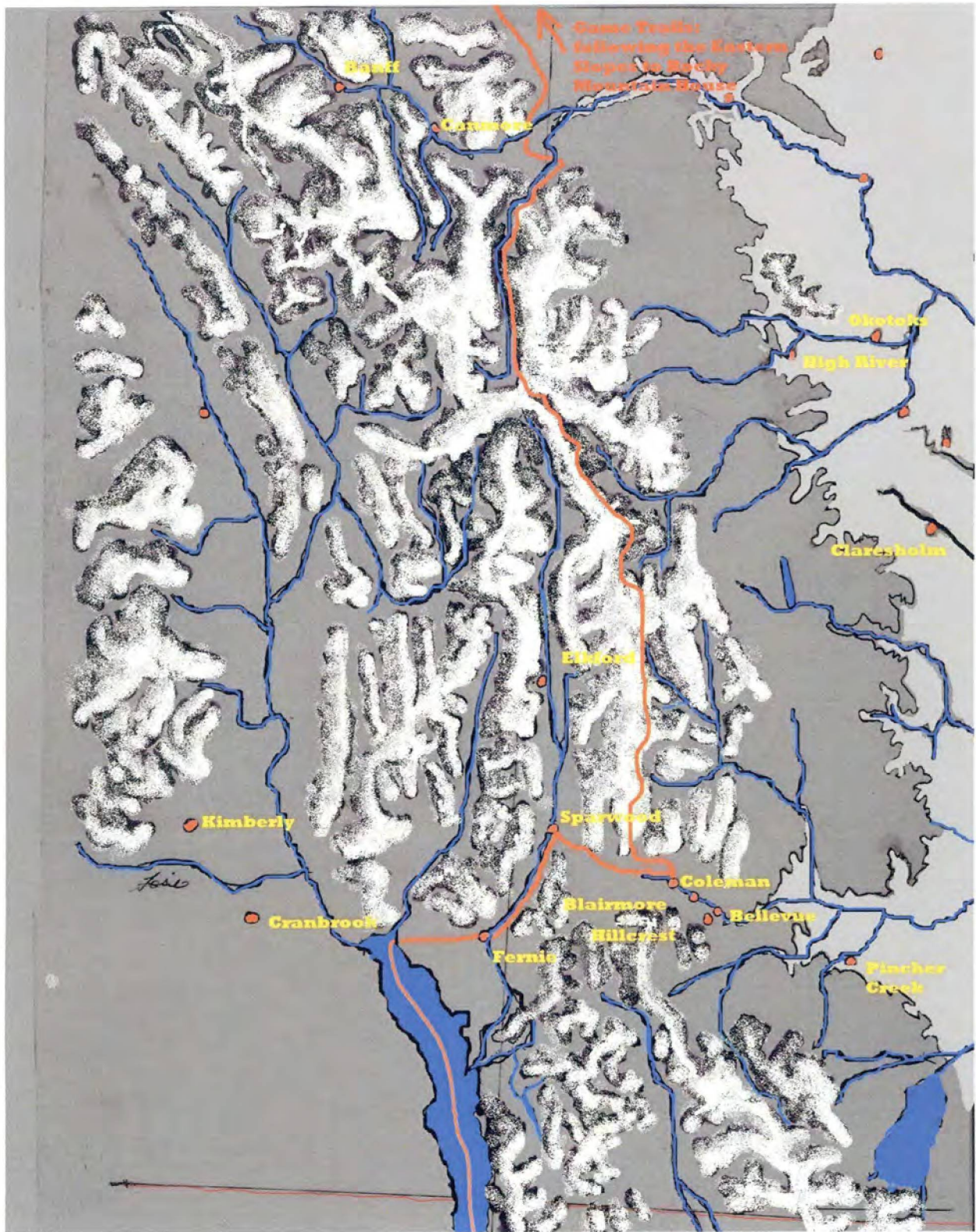
The slight dip is from the erosion of the years creating a channel between the two.

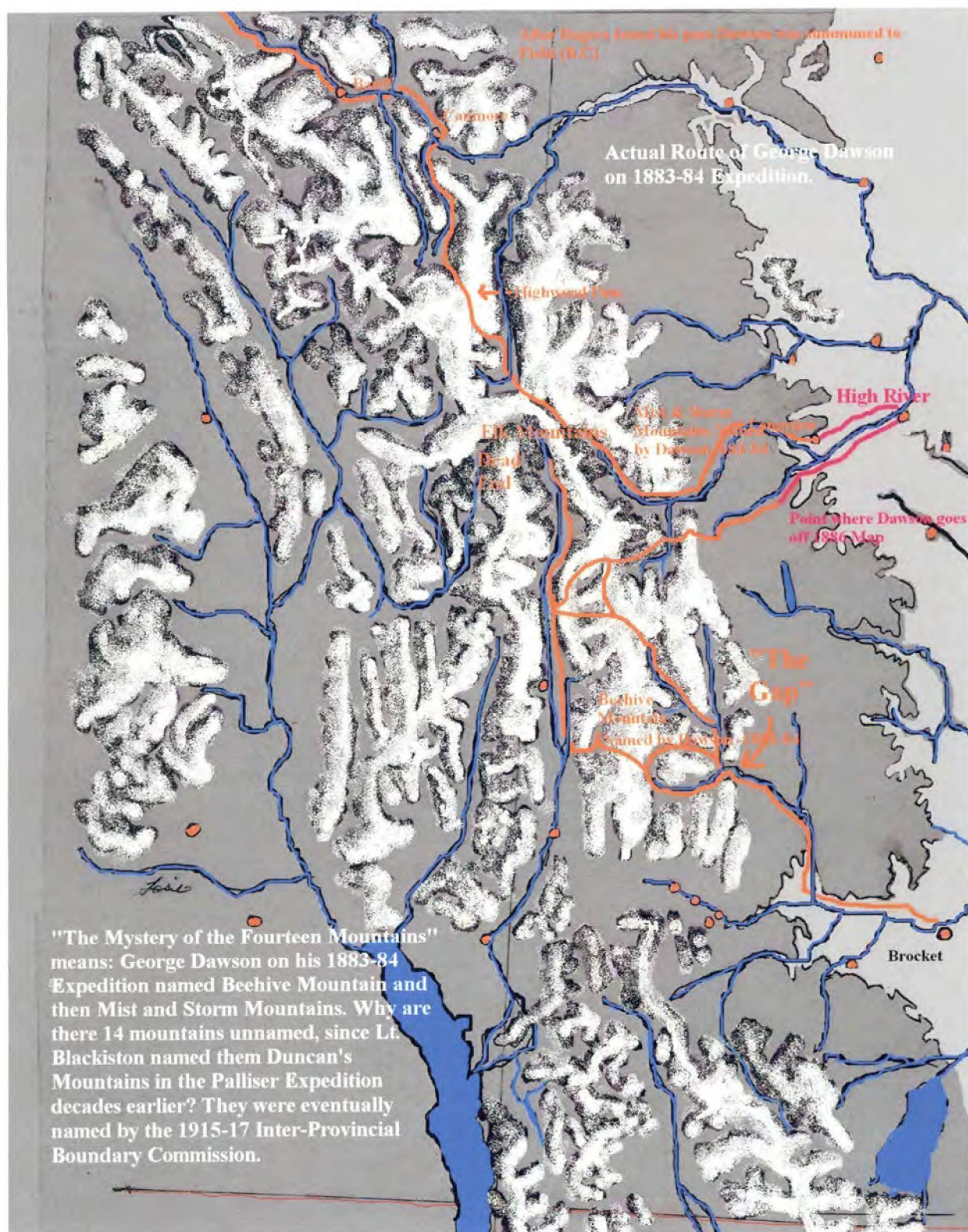
37. Enlarged image of above: Note the size and abundance of the trees on the left of the image and compare it to the right. The trees on the right or the rock side are much larger and healthier than the ones in the "Green Band/Mystery Creek". The difference is the base of support being ineffective and too wet for the promotion of trees as a result these "Covered Up" stream beds travel up the mountain to a canyon which is clearly visible to the human eye.
38. Image of "Green Band/Mystery Creek" - ground penetrating radar would answer the question. What created the phenomena's? Why do the trees grow differently in these bands, which head up the mountain, than other areas?
39. Image from the top of the "Berm" looking down at "Leoville". Does this look man made to you?

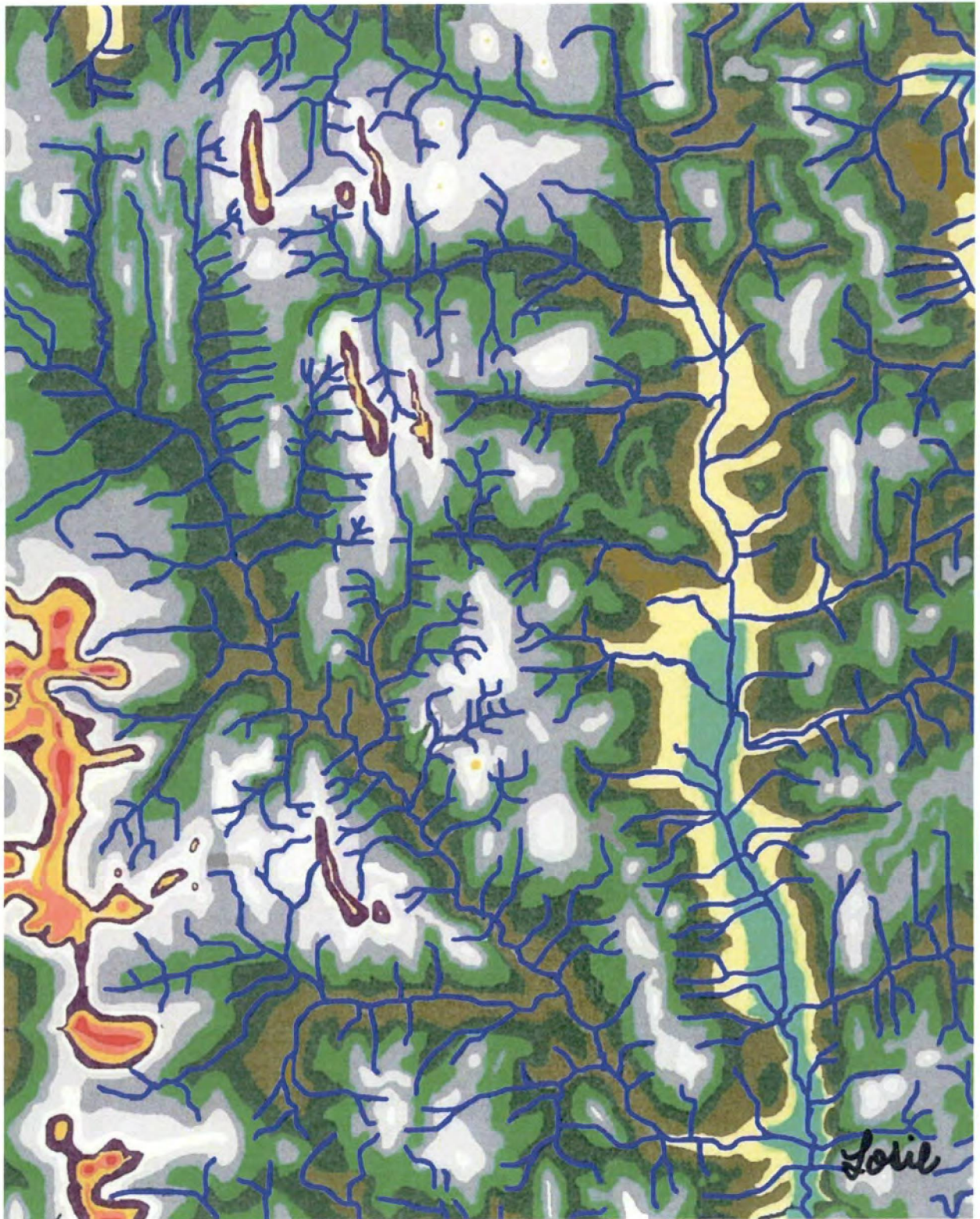


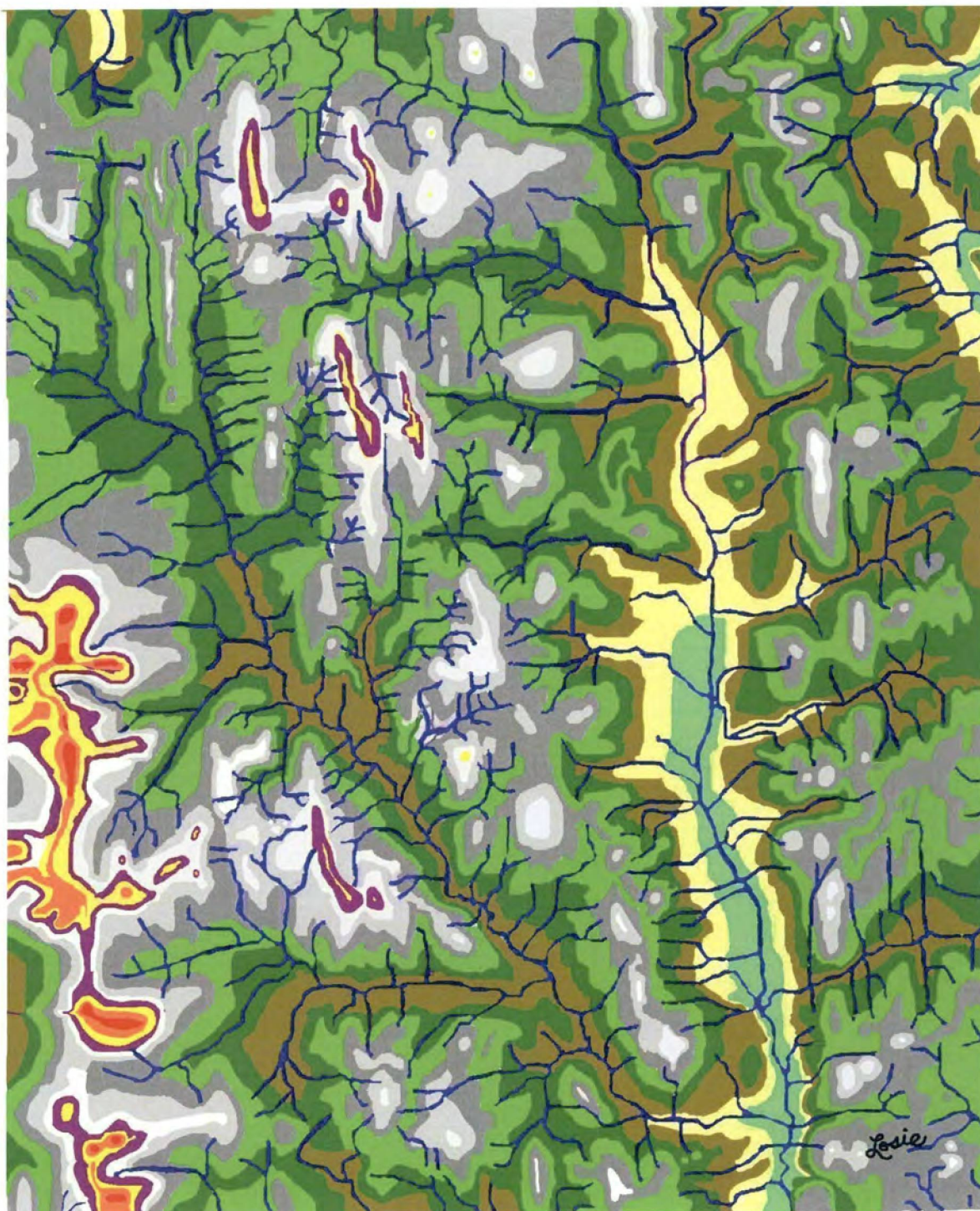
This White Rock is the "Floor" of the "Quartz Shelf". All of the surrounding rock is on top of this White sheet which would expand when rocks are removed from on top.

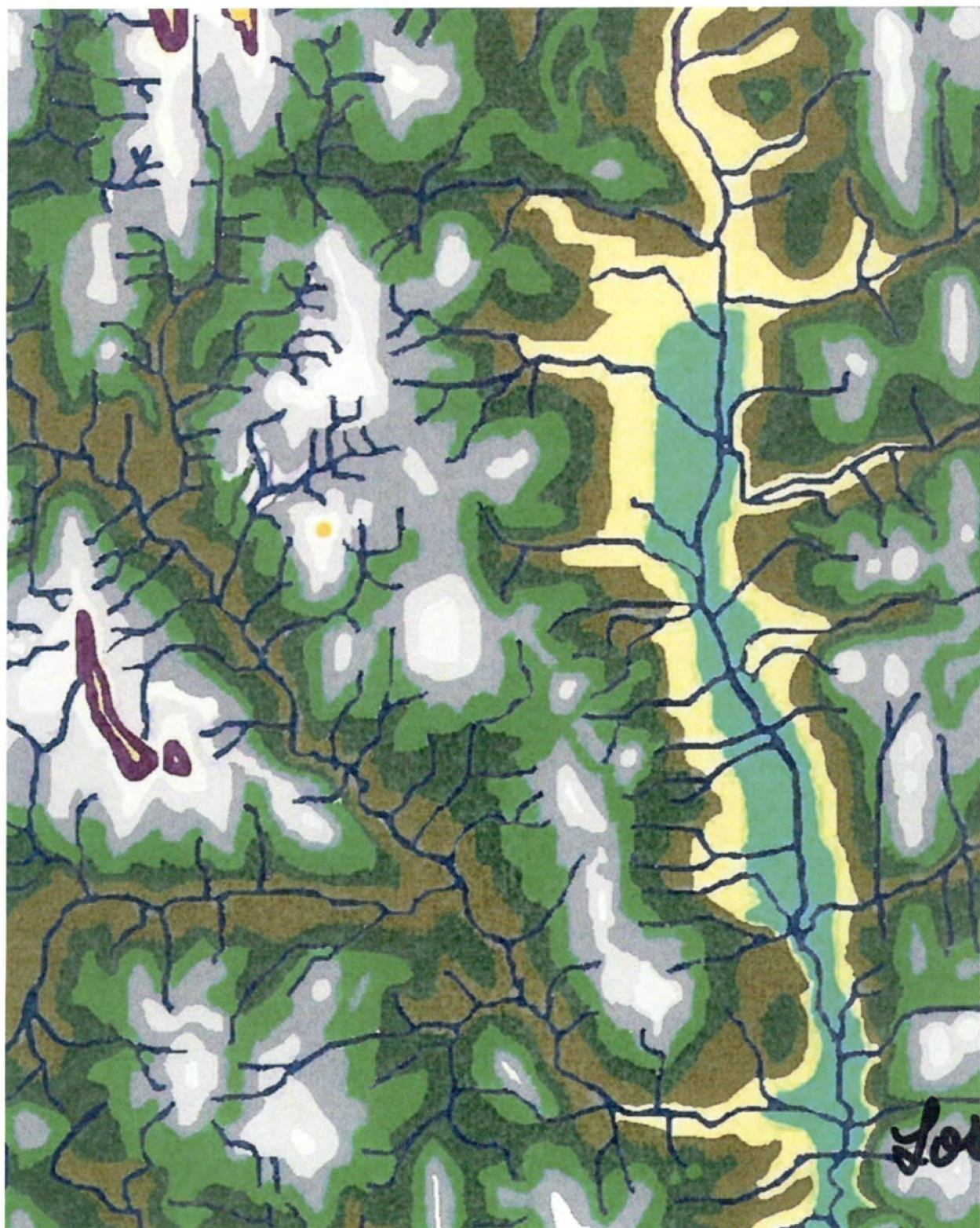


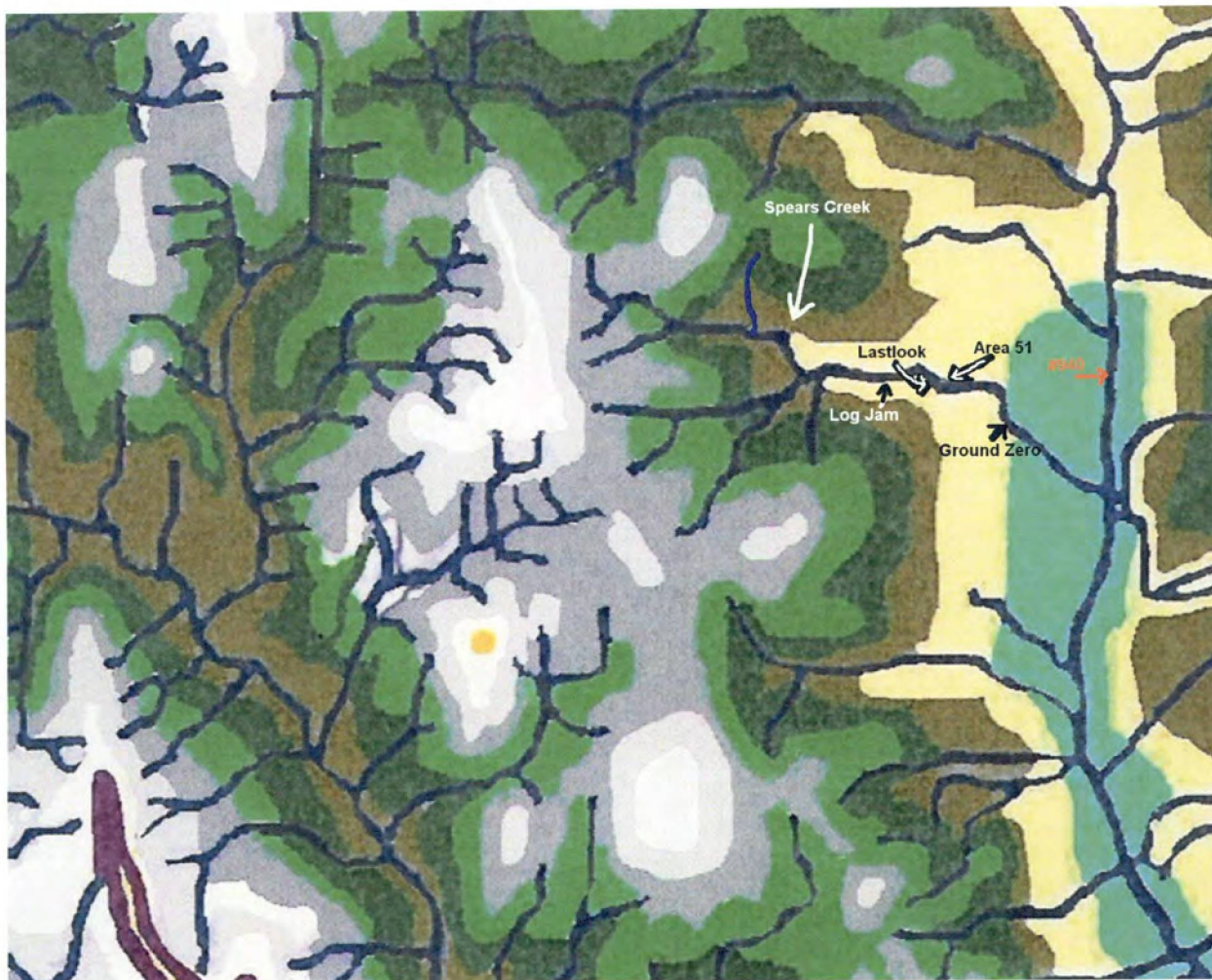


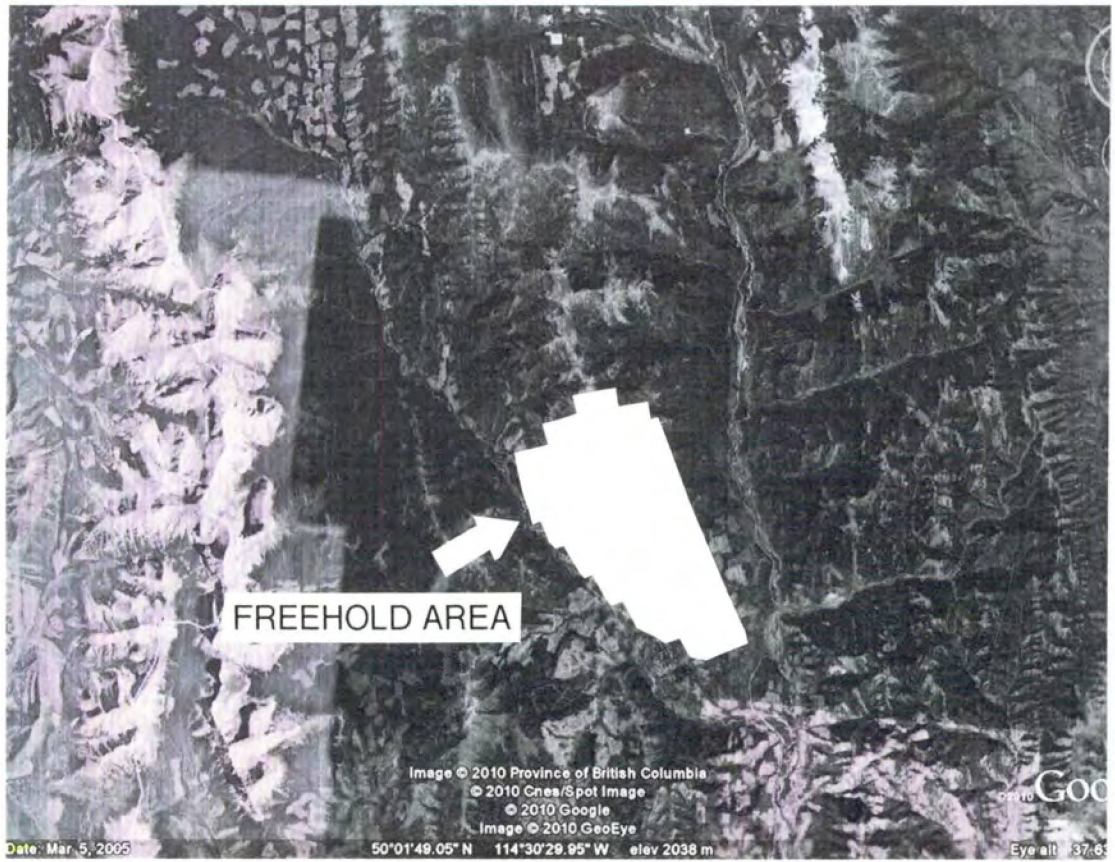


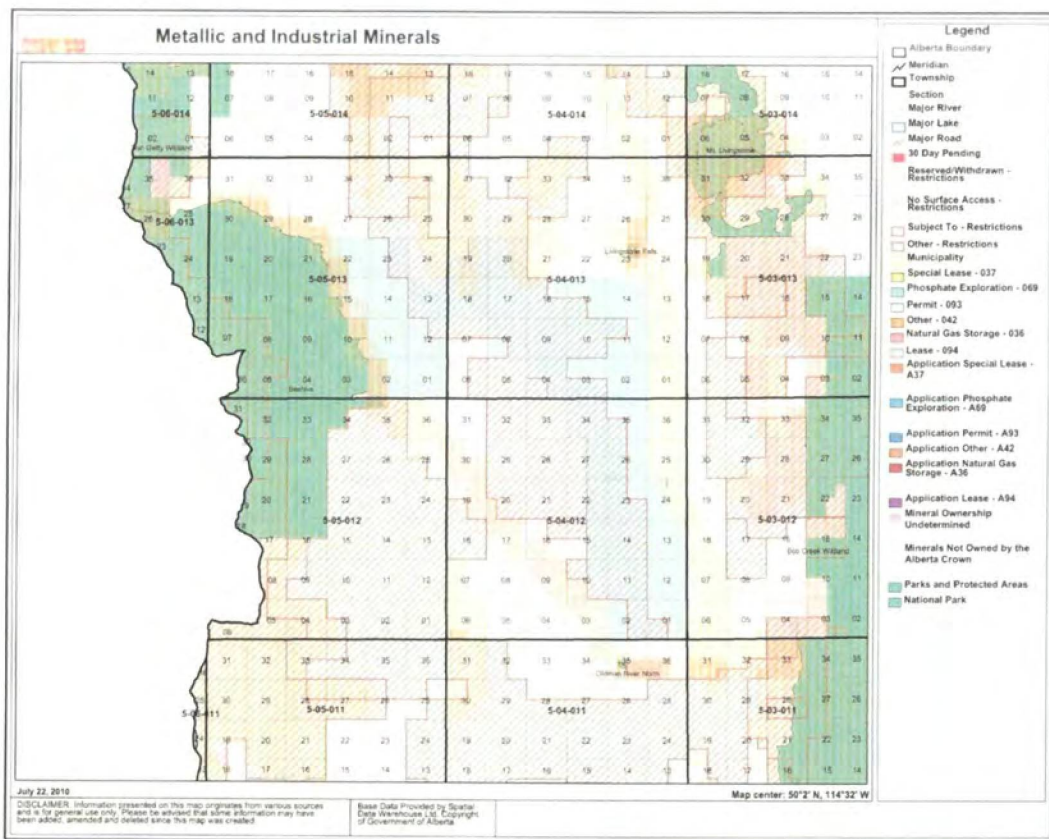


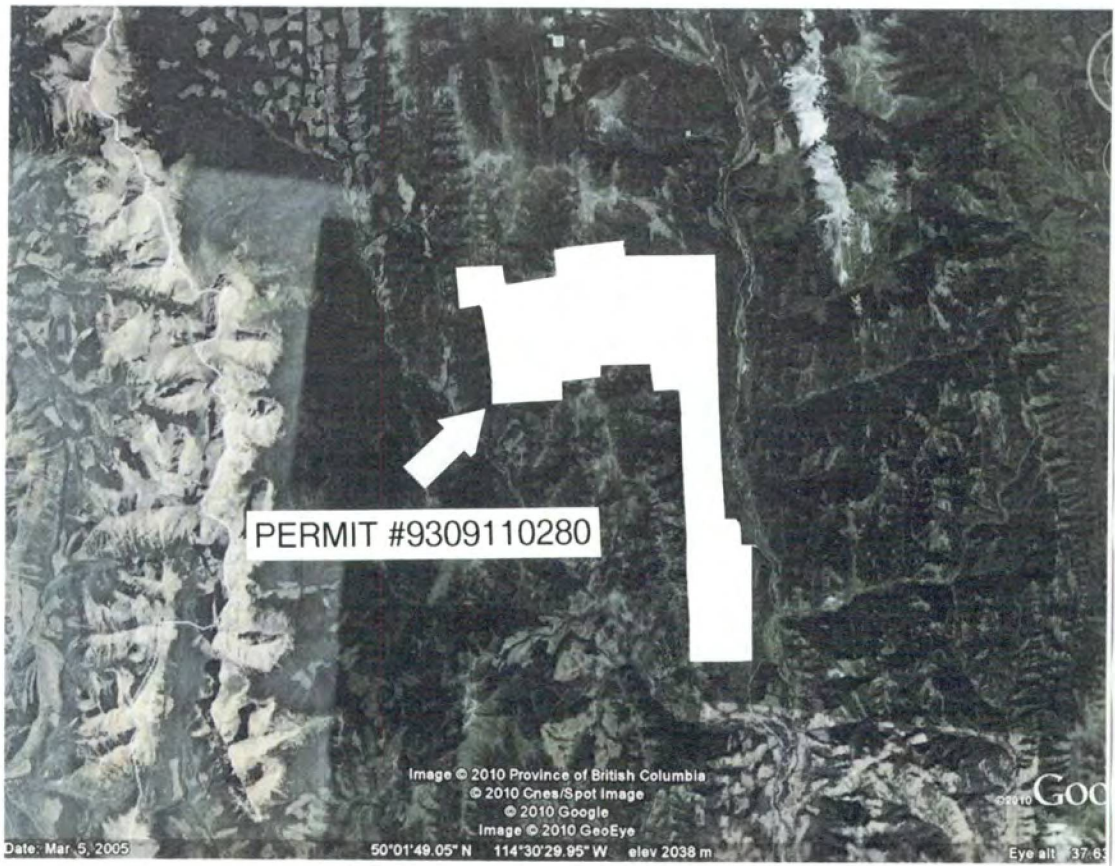


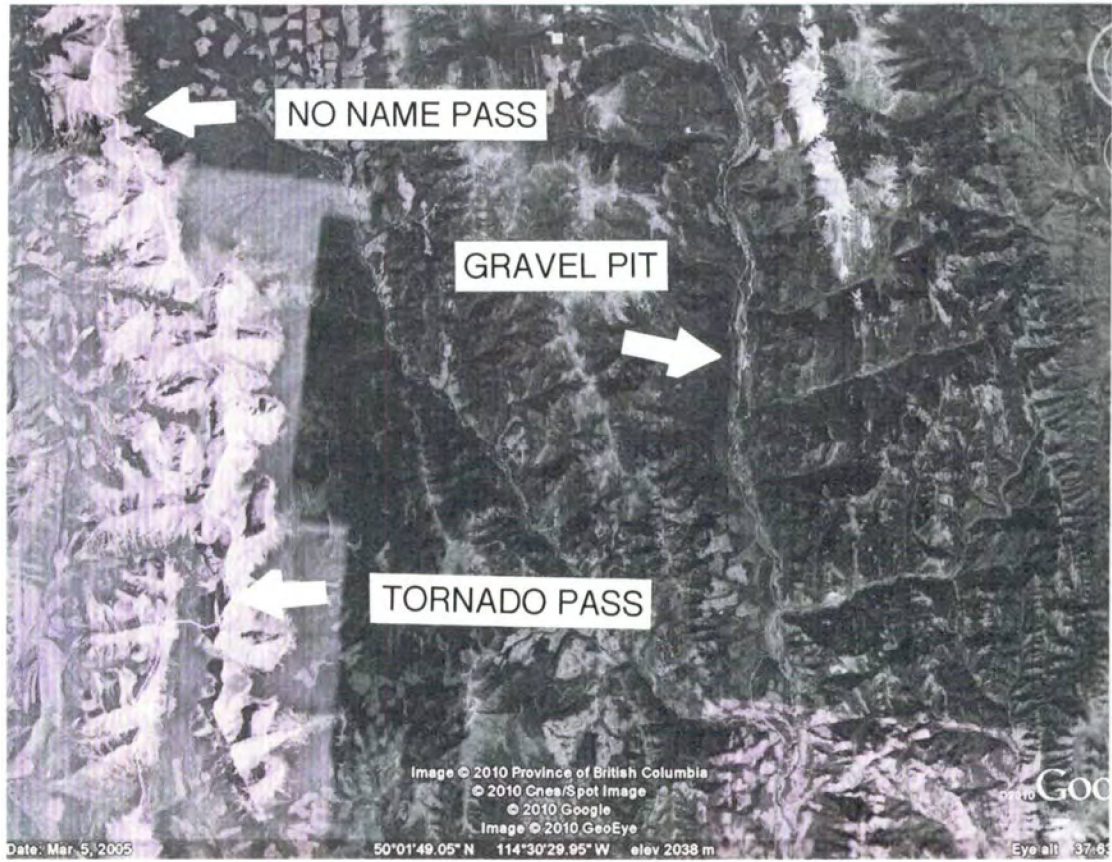




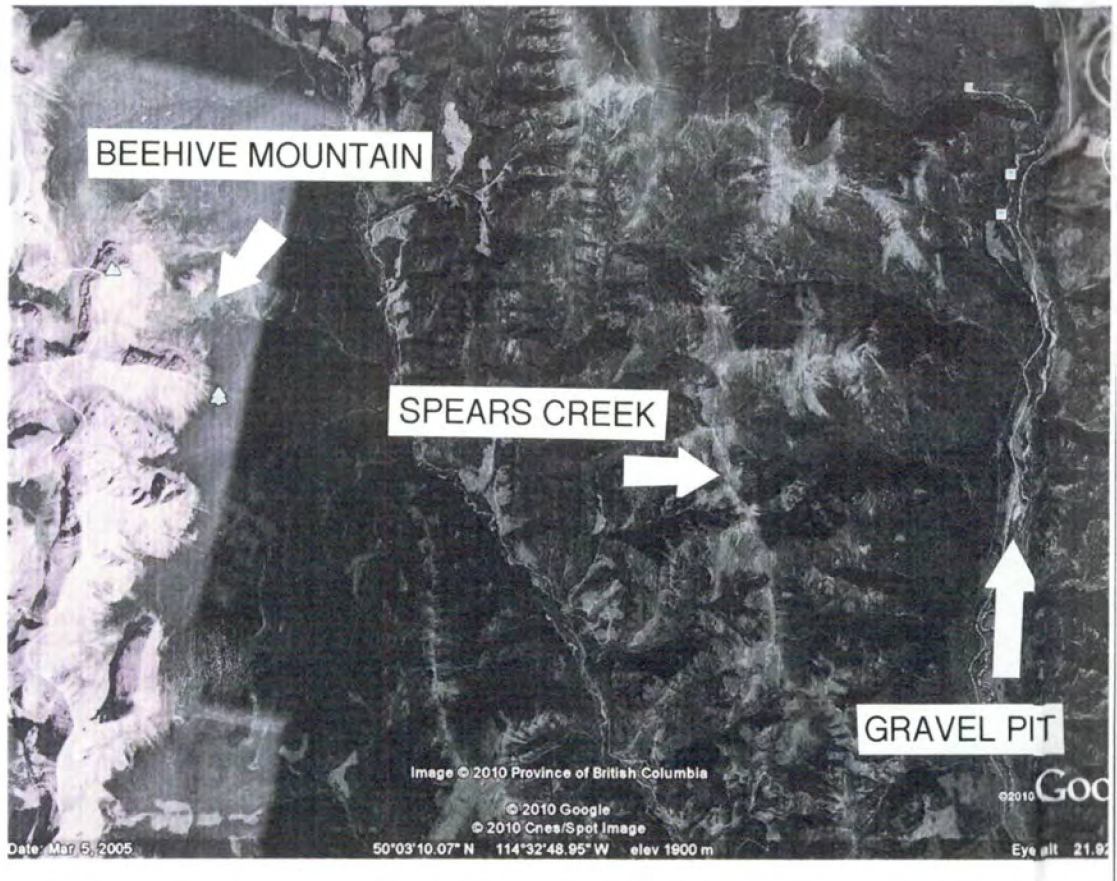


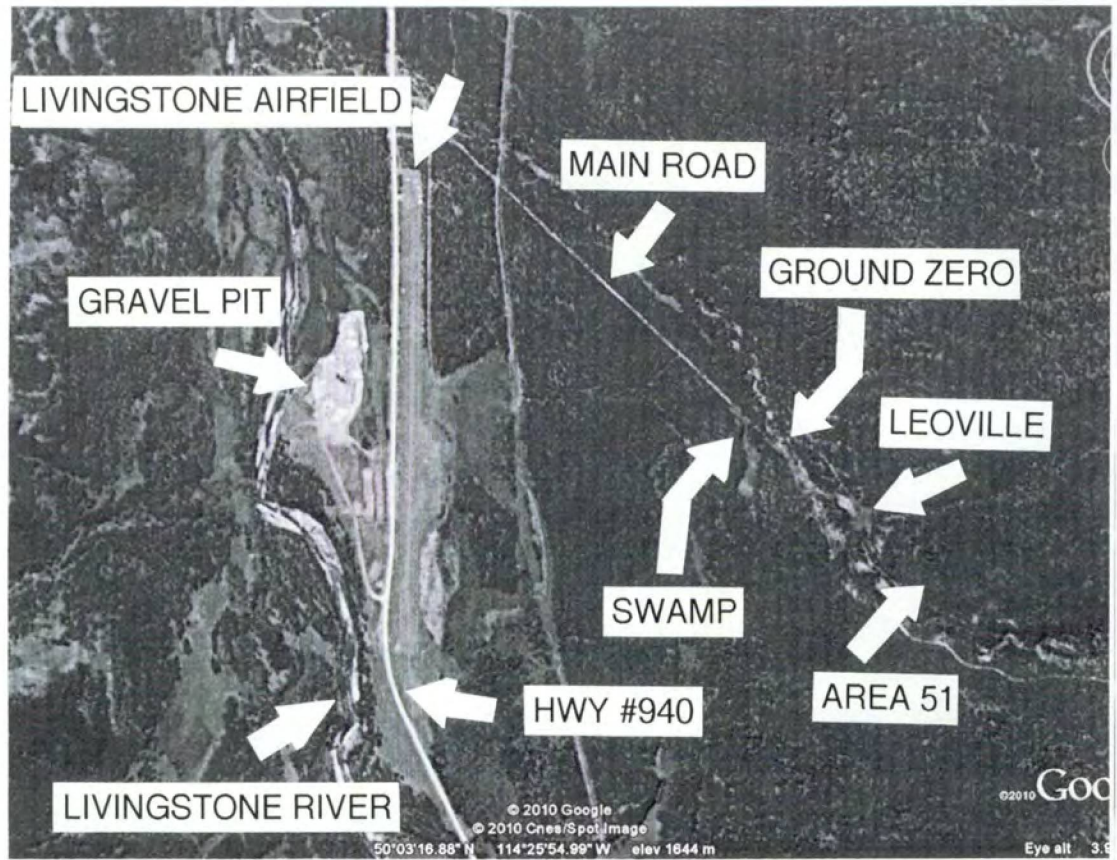


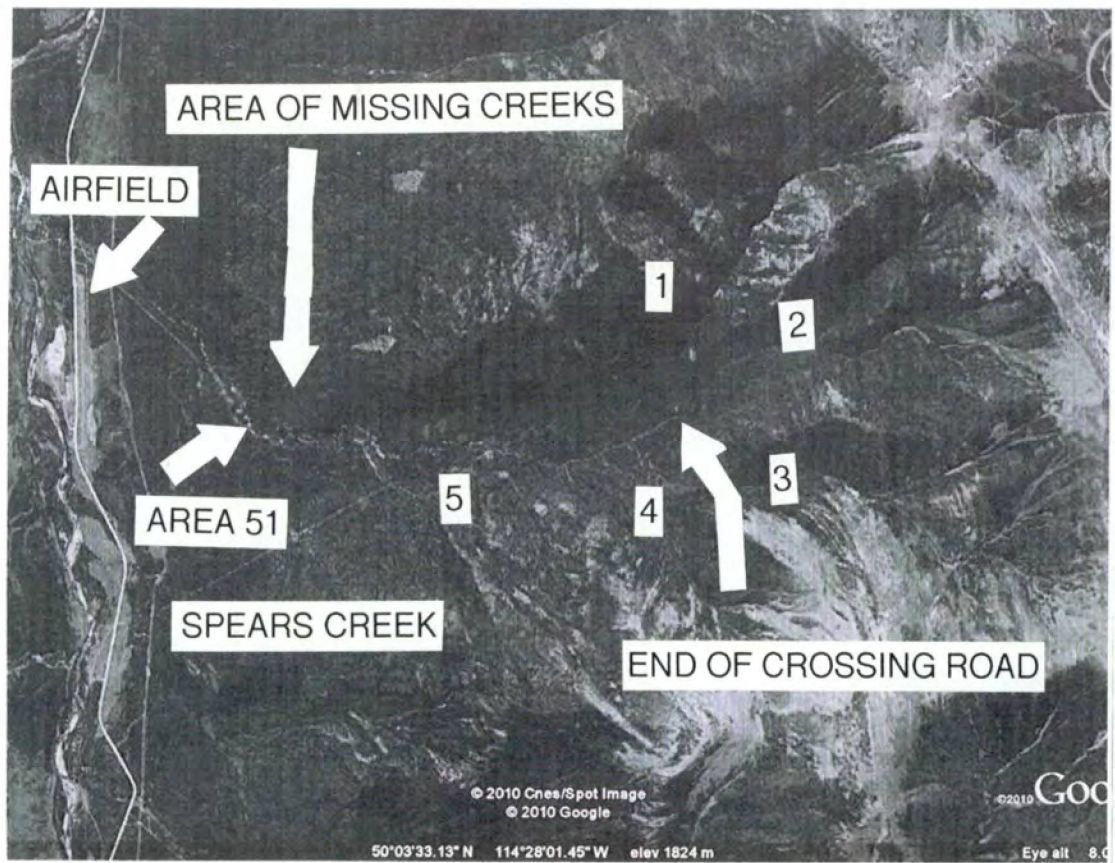


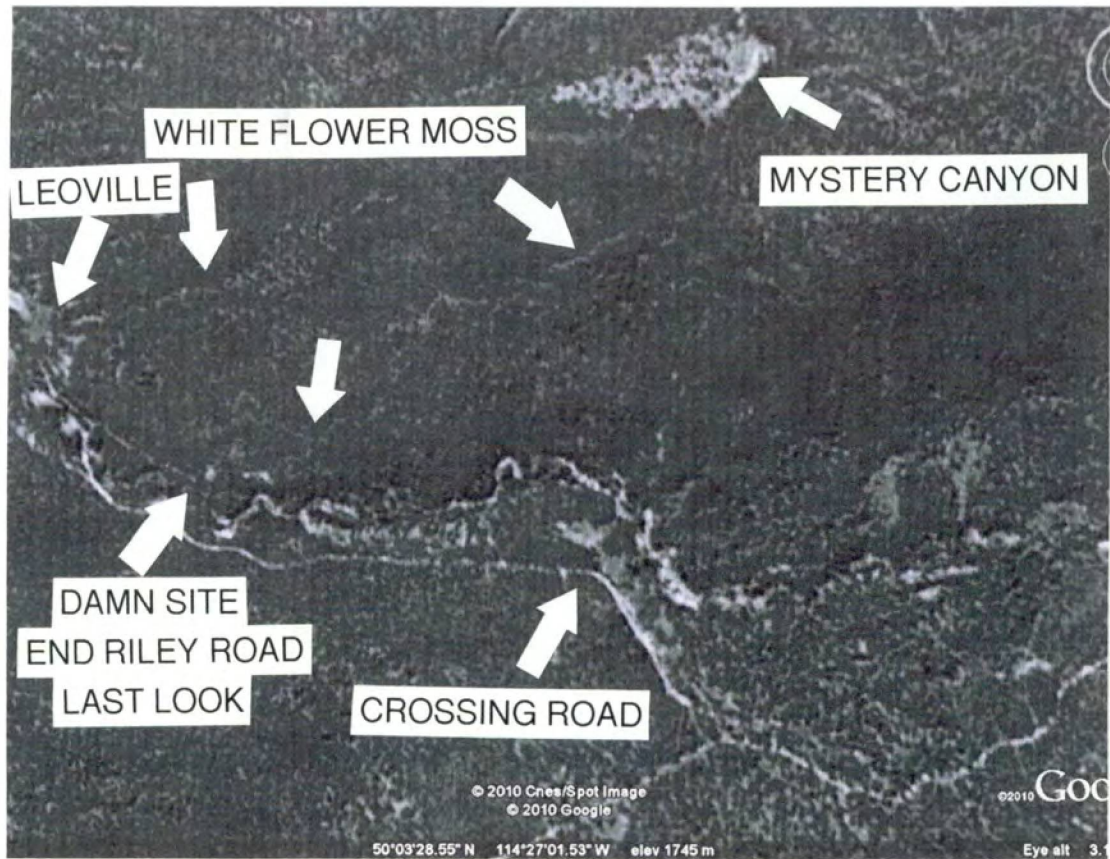


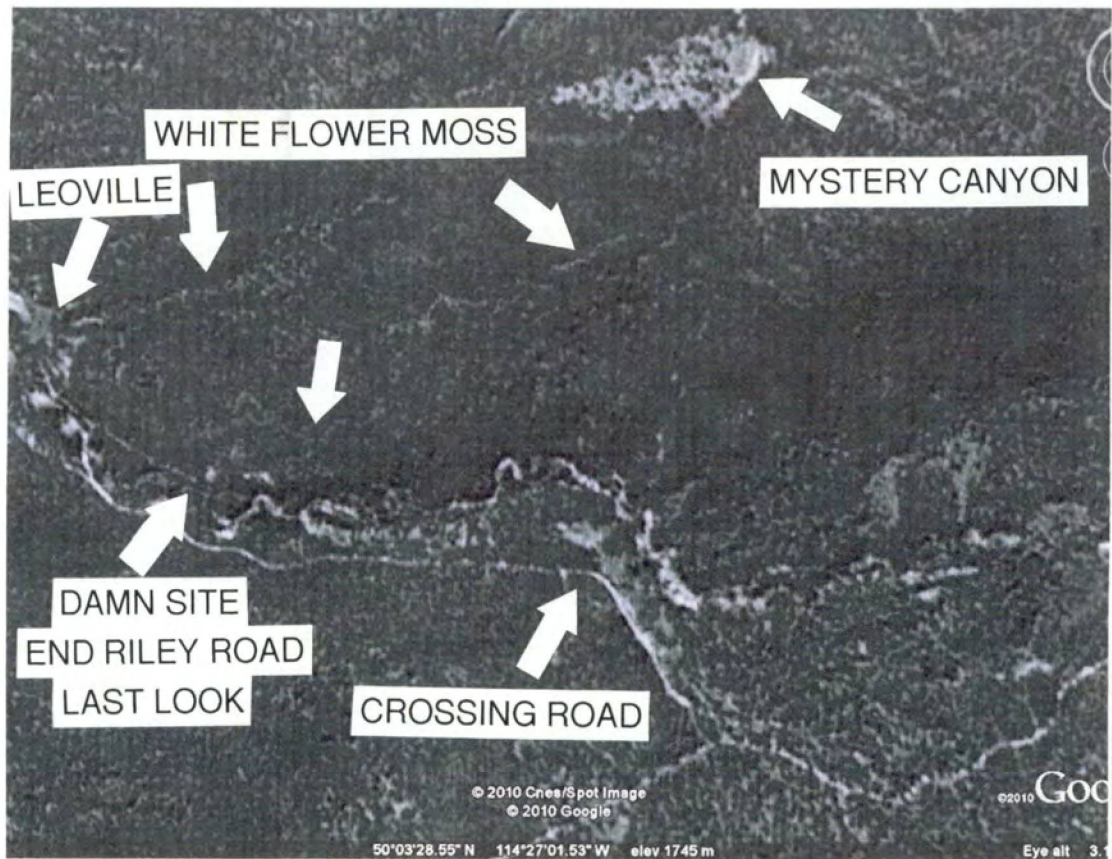








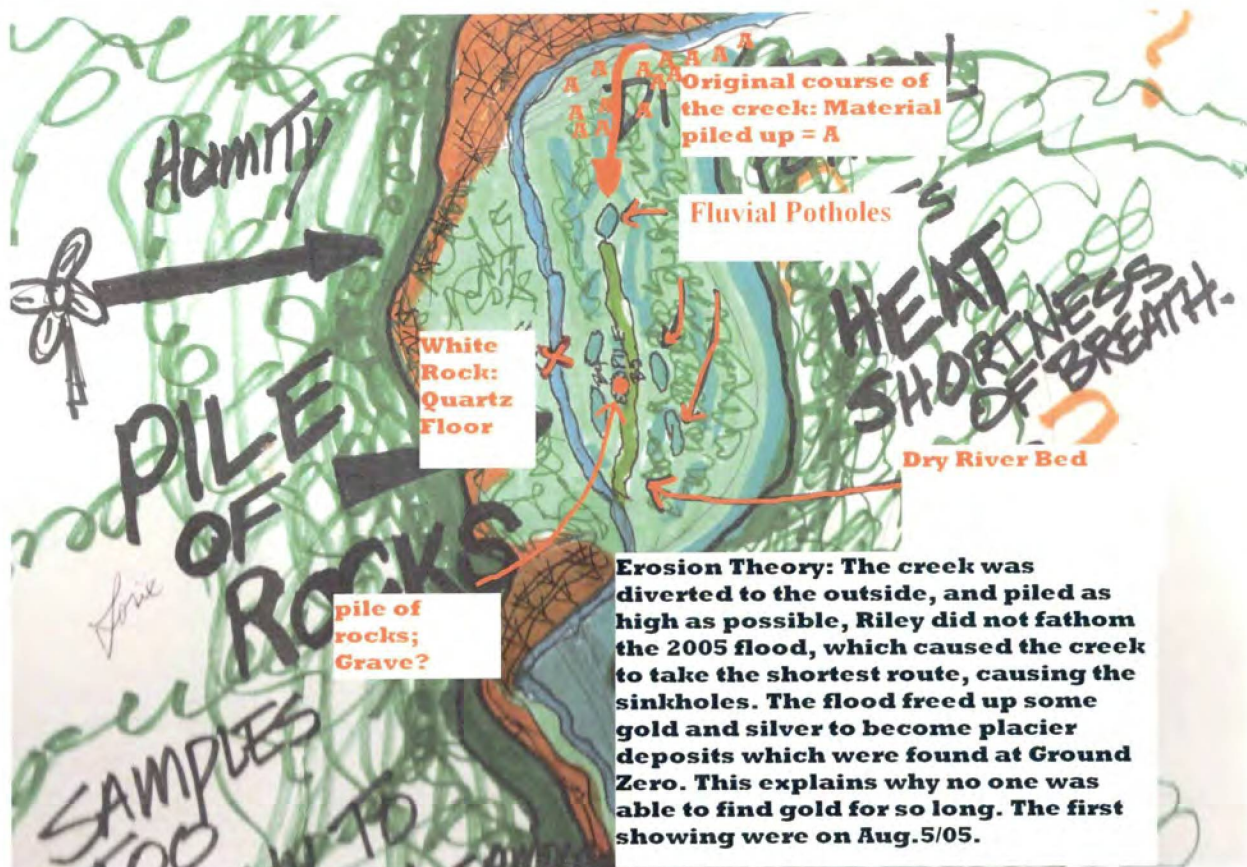












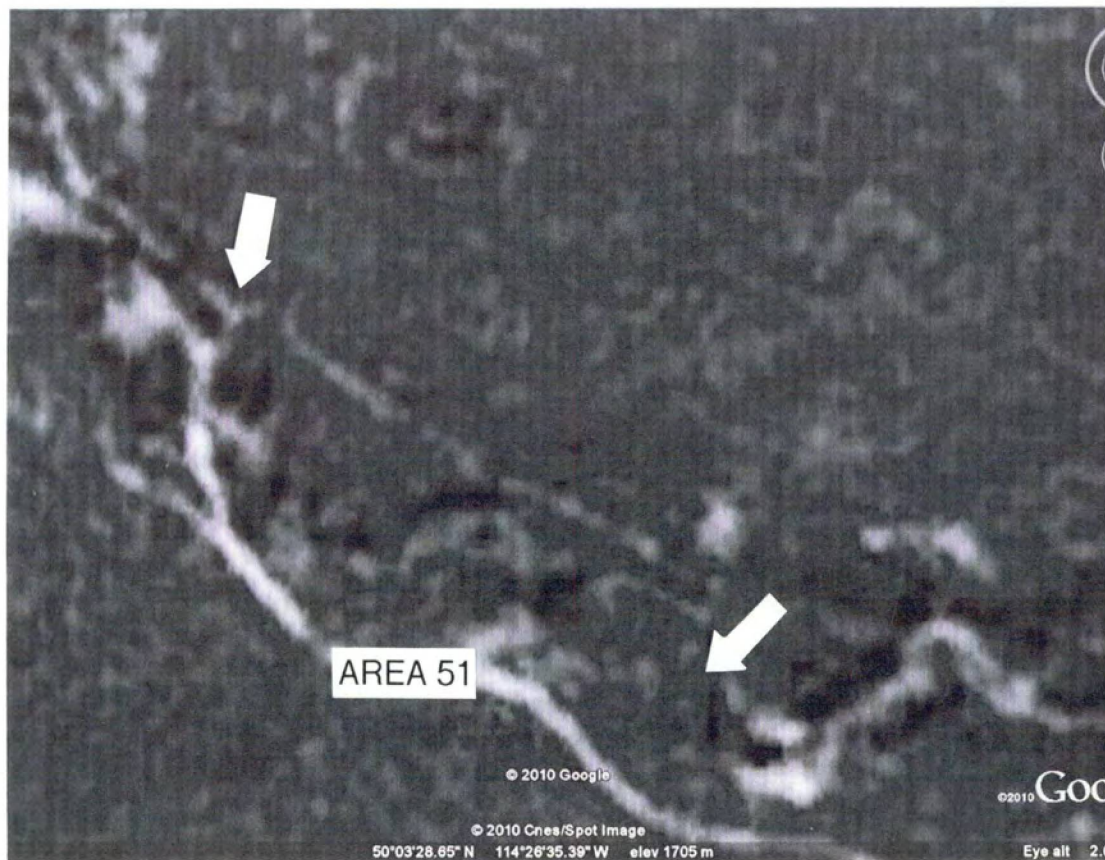


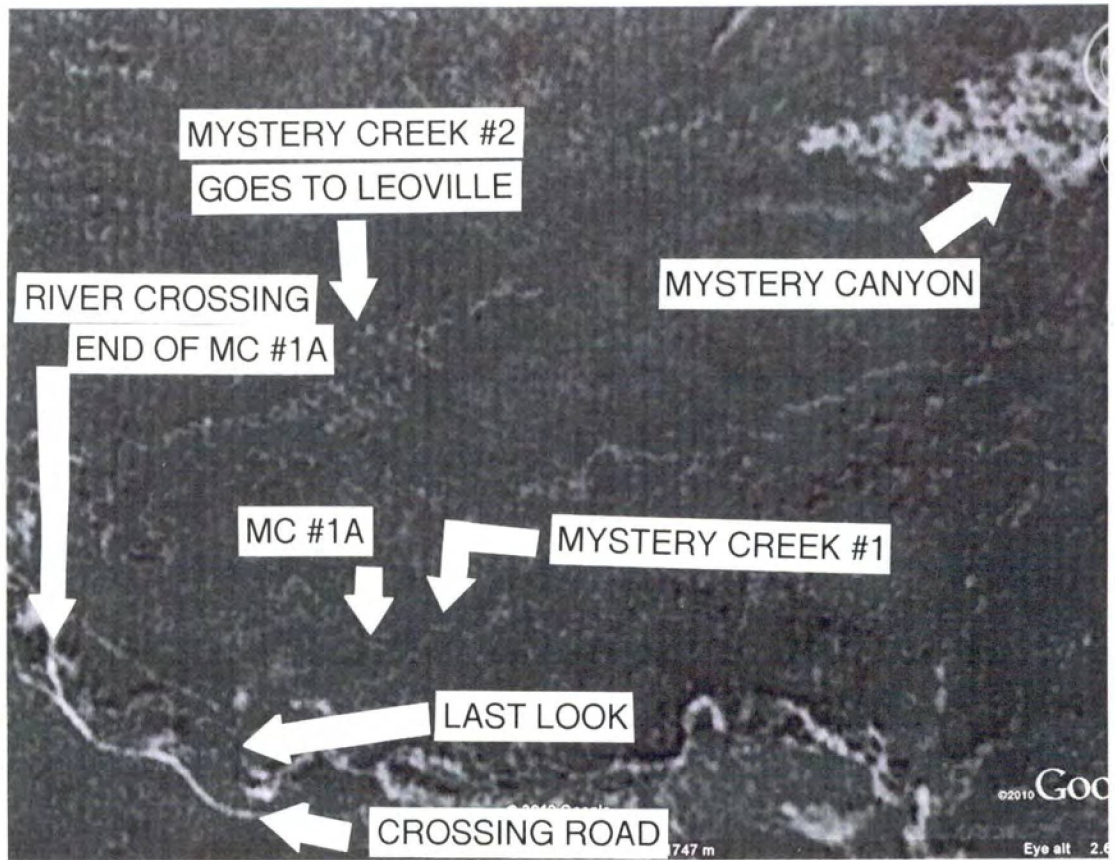




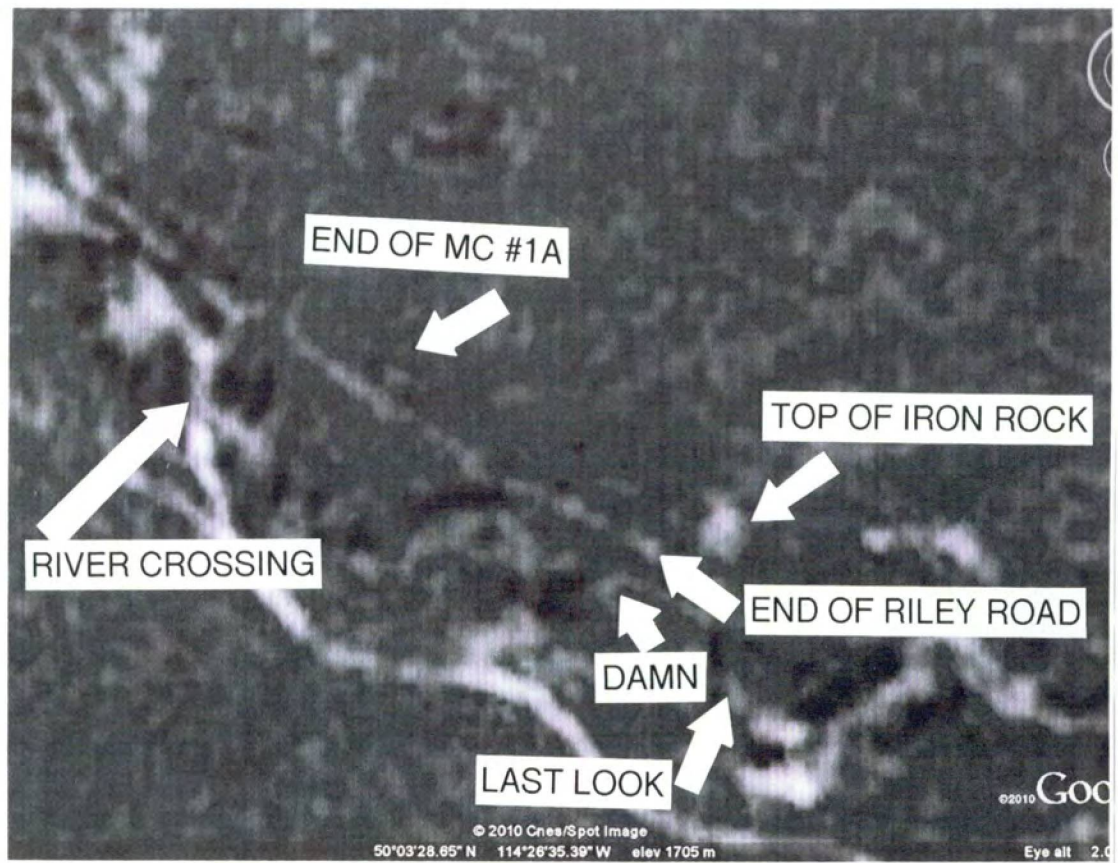


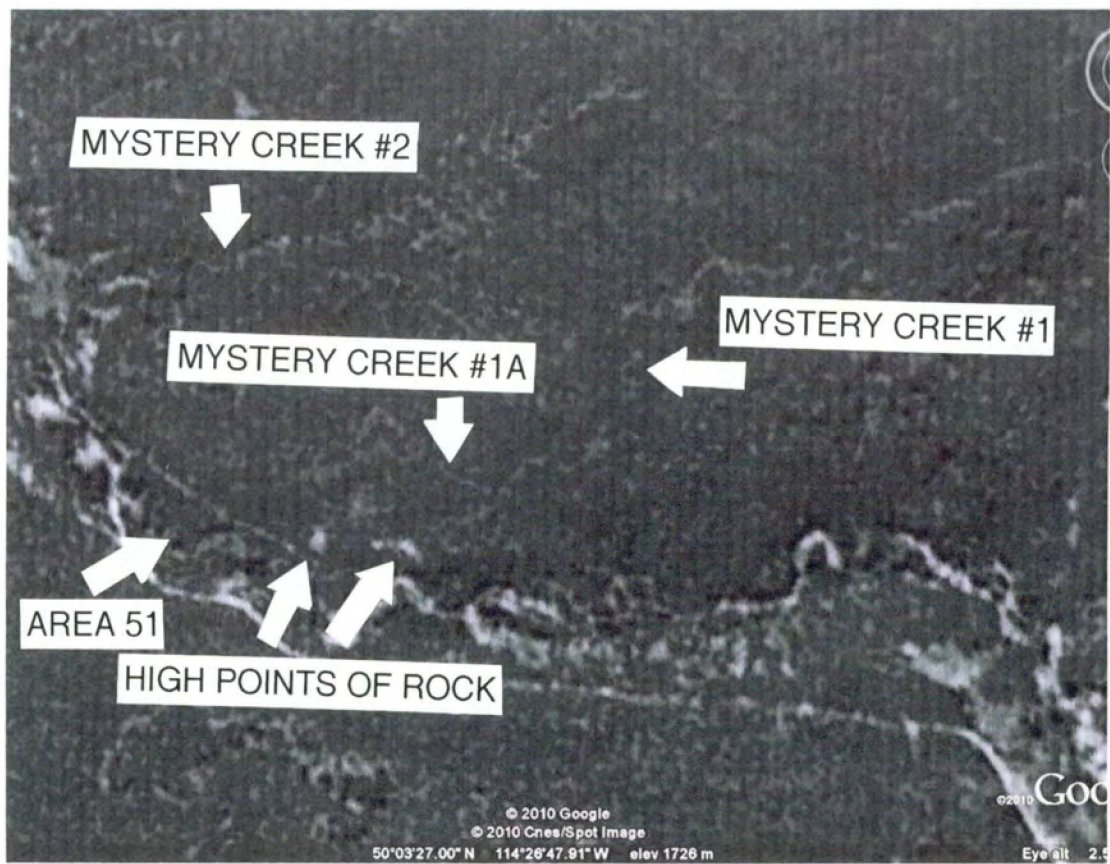


























APPENDIX C - SUPPLEMENTAL

The Lost Lemon Mine

By Senator D. E. Riley
1860 - 1948

There is a fascination in stories of lost mines and lost men. There is the famed McLeod Mine somewhere in the heart of the Sawtooth Nahannies, for which men have searched for forty years only to have it elude them and leave a trail of bleached wolf-gnawed skeletons behind. And then there is the famed Lost Lemon Mine of southern Alberta for which prospectors have sought through the years in vain.

In the spring of 1870, a party of prospectors left Tobacco Plains in Montana to prospect the North Saskatchewan River for gold. Among them were two men, known as Blackjack and Lemon. Blackjack had the reputation of being the best prospector in the west since he was the real discoverer of the Caribou diggings in British Columbia. These two men were staked by Lafayette French, an old-time Indian trader and buffalo hunter.

Leaving the Saskatchewan party, they decided to travel south with a large half-breed band headed by La Nouse, which would afford them protection against hostile Blackfoot. Finally, the party split, the two prospectors following an old Indian lodge-pole trail up High River towards Tobacco Plains, while La Nouse headed for Stand Off. As they proceeded, Blackjack and Lemon found likely showings of gold in the river. Following the mountain stream towards the headwaters, they discovered rich diggings from grassroots to bedrock. They sank two pits and in bringing their Cayuses in from the picket line, they accidentally discovered the ledge from which the gold came.

Traders who saw samples of this rock at Fort Benton described it as resembling a body of solid gold with a little rock shot into it. It was *indescribably* rich!

In camp that night the two prospectors got into an angry argument as to whether they should stake the find and return in the spring or camp right there, which almost led to blows. After they had rolled themselves in their blankets, Lemon stealthily crawled out, seized an axe and split the head of his sleeping partner. Overwhelmed with panic, when the realization of the enormity of his crime penetrated his befuddled brain, Lemon would have fled the spot, but was afraid to leave until daylight. Instead, he built a huge fire and with his gun beneath his arm, strode to and fro like a caged beast until dawn.

Little did he think that two pairs of snaky, black eyes had witnessed the entire tragedy from the cover of the surrounding bush. Two young Stony braves, William and Daniel Bendow, had, however, trailed the pair, watched them sink the holes and seen the discovery of the gold.

As night wore on, Lemon appeared half crazed with the thought of his terrible deed, while, with a grim sense of humour, the young braves added to his distress by whistling, moaning, and making other weird and uncouth sounds. With the first streak of dawn, Lemon mounted his Cayuse and hit the trail across the mountains. Meanwhile the two Stony's ransacked the camp,

took the two remaining Cayuses and set out for the Stony Village at Morley where they reported all they had seen to old Chief Bearpaw. Fearful lest the whites hear of the gold-strike, and overrun their game-filled hunting grounds, the old chief swore the young men to everlasting secrecy.

Since that day *many* attempts have been made to bribe them by prospectors in search of the Lost Lemon Mine. Bands of horses, herds of cattle, small fortunes to these children of the plains, have been offered to them in vain, yet their tongues remained sealed.

When Lemon arrived at Tobacco Plains, he confessed his crime to the priest, an old friend of his. He had with him the gold they had found on the day of the killing, as well as a sample of the rock they had discovered; but he seemed half-crazed from the recollection of his crime.

Promptly the priest dispatched a half-breed mountain-man named John McDougall, to the scene of the tragedy. McDougall found the spot, buried Blackjack, reared a mound of stones over the grave to keep off prowling wolves, and returned to Tobacco Plains. No sooner had he left than Bearpaw's braves tore down the mound of stones, scattered them piecemeal and obliterated the last trace of the murder. How well they did their work is indicated by the fact that, through succeeding years, the secret has remained so well hidden that the spot has *yet* to be rediscovered.

All that winter Lemon remained with the priest, on the borderline of insanity. Meanwhile word of the rich find had spread far afield, and as soon as it was possible to travel in the spring a large party of miners, guided by Lemon, set out to relocate the mine.

But fate was against them! Though Lemon scoured the gulches and hillsides, he declared he was unable to locate the spot, only to be accused by the angry miners of deliberately misleading them. In the heated quarrel that ensued, Lemon, threatened with death at the hands of the angry men, suddenly became violently insane. All night his own party stood guard over the raving man, and next morning set out with him for Tobacco Plains. From there he went to his brother's ranch in Texas where he lived many years, having lucid intervals, but never fully recovering his reason.

Next year the priest outfitted another party from Tobacco Plains. The leader was to be the John McDougall who had buried Blackjack. McDougall, who was over at Fort Benton, was to meet the rest of the party at Crow's Nest Lake, and they were to proceed north from there. McDougall left Fort Benton to keep his appointment, but at Fort Kipp, a notorious whiskey post, he drank himself to death.

The following year, still another party was equipped and reached the lake where mountain fired burned all the grass and timber forcing them to again abandon the enterprise.

Next spring the priest sent out a smaller party under the guidance of Lemon, who was still living at Tobacco Plains. But proximity to the place of tragic memories again unsettled the man's addled mind, and the party was forced to take him back.

Disgusted, the priest gave up the search for the lost mine, but it was immediately taken up by others. One of these was a man named Nelson, a member of the first Lemon party. A tireless

summer's search, however, failed to deliver up the secret of the location of the gold, so the party disbanded, each man conducting an independent but unsuccessful search. Finally, Lafayette French arrived at Tobacco Plains determined to unlock the secret of the hoard of hidden gold. In the vastness of the hills he was overtaken by a strange sickness and dragged himself back to Tobacco Plains more dead than alive. Some strange hoodoo seemed to haunt all those who sought the lost mine. To a friend, French showed a rough pen-and-ink sketch of rivers-and-mountain ranges. At the head of stream with three forks was a cross and against it the magic legend "Gold". The map, he said, was made by Lemon, and the mark represented the location of the Lemon Mine --- the richest thing ever found in the vicinity of the Rockies. That, he said, was the reason he had come to Alberta, and he insisted he would continue the search for the lost mine as long as he had breath in his body. For the next fifteen years Lafayette French continued to devote himself unswervingly to his self-imposed task.

French went about his work methodically. He spent some months in the 1890's with the two survivors of the several expeditions that had searched for the mine. He even had one of them come by pack train to Crow's Nest Lake and then north in an endeavor to have him identify some of the landmarks in the district traveled by the first expedition headed by Lemon. He kept La Nouse and his band of half-breeds through the winter of 1883, in order to check, in the spring, and discover where Lemon and Blackjack parted company with him.

French fed William Bendow, the Stony Indian and his followers one winter at Lee's ranch on Pincher Creek and, in the spring, put twenty five horses and twenty five cattle in a pasture, which would become the Stony Indian's property the moment he showed them the spot where the killing had taken place. William agreed, but on the second day out some superstitious terror took possession of him --- possibly he was afraid Chief Bearpaw would work bad medicine on him --- and he refused to go a step further. Again the expedition was abandoned!

Just a few days before French's death he made another bargain with the Stony to show him the place he had sought so long. William and his band were on their way to Morley and agreed to camp at the old George Sage place --- an abandoned ranch on the middle fork of High River --- until French could get George Emerson to join them. Again William agreed to conduct them to the murder spot. That night William died suddenly. Convinced that it was the effect of bad medicine worked upon him through his intention to betray the secret of the tribe, his people placed his body in a Red River cart and carried it fearfully back to the reserve at Morley. The night of their arrival William's son-in-law died in the same mysterious manner, another manifestation, according to the Indians, of the wrath of *Wahcondah*. To this day the Stony's become grim, tight-lipped and fearful, the moment the Lemon Mine is mentioned.

The hoodoo that had haunted French continued to dog his footsteps to the very last. In a fire of mysterious origin that destroyed the Emerson House on the night of his return from the last unhappy expedition, he was terribly burned. On the same evening, he had written a letter to a friend, at Fort Benton and posted it at the Bar U Ranch. Evidently it was written in a state of exaltation and excitement. He had at last, he said, located it and was coming to High River in a couple of days to tell him everything and enlist his help. On his arrival he was unable to talk before he died, so if he had actually solved the problem, which had occupied so many years of his life, the secret died with him.

Numerous attempts have been made since that time to relocate the mine, the most notable one as recently as 1929. Many there are who say nothing will be found this side of the mountains, but geologists designate a tract of land between Crow's Nest Lake and Mist Mountain, on the headwaters of the Highwood River, as a disturbed area in which precious metals *might* be discovered. In the opinion of old prospectors, if the Lemon Mine is ever found it will be in this territory, which is really a trough of the Cretaceous Sea, bounded on the west by the Paleozoic limestone of the main range of the Rockies and on the east by the Livingstone range. This trough is now a north and south valley, transversely cut by the three watersheds of Sheep Creek, Highwood and Old Man rivers. The area is rich in coal, low-grade phosphate rock and low-grade deposits of iron. Yet nowhere on these streams have colours of gold been found, though it is safe to say that everyone has been prospected time and time again by searchers after the elusive Lemon Mine.

If one were to believe the stories that have drifted down from the early days, the search for this hidden Eldorado has claimed more than Blackjack's life. There is a story of a white man's skeleton found in the gap of the Old Man River, the bony fingers still clutching a bag of gold. There is the story of two men, badly wounded, stopping overnight in the 1890's at a ranch in the foothills. They carried gold dust and were fleeing from the West. They rode away the next morning for Fort McLeod, but never arrived. Had they re-discovered the lost Lemon Mine only to be followed and killed by the Indians?

From time to time old mounds and pits were found, the remains of cabins deep in hidden gulches, old rusted muzzle loading guns, pack-saddles, cooking outfits, rat-gnawed bed-rolls, and I.G.Baker tin containers date these. Again there is talk of the Lost Lemon Mine and foul play--- for a man in the mountains doesn't abandon his outfit unless tragedy has intervened.

"The Lost Lemon Mine"

What I Know About It
D.H. Riley

The history of the lost Lemon Mine was told to me, bit by bit, year by year, around many a campfire. By that old frontiersman, Lafayette French, as we traveled, prospected and camped in the fastness of the Rocky Mountains in the years that are past.

For a better understanding of this story I will tell you who Lafayette French was. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1840 and came to the Western States as a very young man. There he spent several years on the American frontier. He appeared in the Northwest Territory as an Indian trader and buffalo hunter in the pre-Mounted Police days. He came after the Lemon Mine had been found and lost by the two prospectors that he had grubstaked in Montana previously. One, "Blackjack", was dead, - murdered on the eve of discovery by the other, Lemon, who was driven insane by his deed. Lafayette French came to this country to find the lost Lemon Mine.

At the time the Blackfoot treaty was signed in 1878, he was operating a trading post at the Blackfoot Crossing. This was the camp ground of "Crowfoot", mighty chief of the Blackfoot, and war chief of the Blackfoot Bloods, North Pieigans and South Peigan tribes. These tribes comprised the entire Indian population of the great plains stretching throughout Alberta into Montana. The remnants of the old Iroquois confederacy had been driven into this territory and absorbed into the Western tribes. Bitterly aware of the white trader's policy, this last domain had long been kept inaccessible to the white men. Over it ruled "Crowfoot" inimical to anything but his subject's interests. He was absolute. He maintained his own police force and they carried out his order to the letter. There was no appeal from his decision. Today we have dictators but no dictator in the world of today is more absolute than was the mighty "Crowfoot". If a member of the tribe, or a whole village deserved punishment, they disappeared and the places that then knew them, knew them no more forever. Nor were his decisions ever questioned. This would be very unwise in the days, and under the rule of "Crowfoot".

French early won the friendship of the noted Blackfoot chief and became his confidant and advisor, indicative of the trader's personality and character. While Colonel McLeod, head of the N.W.M.P. for a week, waited in his tent, day after day, for the chiefs to sign the Blackfoot Treaty, "Crowfoot's" confidence in, and his esteem for French continued until his death. He paid French an annual visit when he later located a ranch at High River. However, among the rank and file of the Indians, French who they called "Ozonaw", or the Left Hand, (because he was left handed), was more feared than respected.

Shortly after the Treaty, French and another Indian trader, G.H. Smith, or "Smithy", started a ranch at what is now High River. They had a bunch of breeding mares and one hundred and fifty head of cattle. They were the first men to break the sod in this district. Their ranch was one of the stopping places on the

old Fort Benton and Edmonton trail, and by which all supplies came into the country at this time – coming up the Missouri River to Fort Benton. The stage dropped the local mail here and a soap box served as the first Post Office in High River.

The first job I got in this country was with them in the spring of 1883. In the autumn of that year they took up what is now the G.S. Ranch, twenty-five miles west, and moved their stock to it. Next year French went to the Stony Indian Reservation in the foothills (now Morleyville), as Government Nation Issuer and remained there for several years. He did this in order to get acquainted with the Stony Indians and, if possible, learn from them the location of the Lemon Mine. They alone had this knowledge.

The Discovery of the Lemon Mine

Sometime, about the spring of 1870, a party of miners left Tobacco Plains in Montana to prospect the North Saskatchewan River, known even at that time to contain showings of fine gold. In the party were two men known as "Blackjack" and "Lemon". The former had the reputation of being the best prospector in the West, having found some of the richest placer camps in the Western States and was the real discoverer of the famous Caribou diggings in British Columbia. These two experienced prospectors were staked by French and traveled with the party to the Saskatchewan River. They found gold, but not in paying quantities, so in the fall they decided to leave the rest of the party and return to Tobacco Plains to winter.

They gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to travel south with a large half-breed party, headed by one Le Nouse whom I knew well. This escort offered protection against the Blackfoot and Blood Indians who were hostile. They traveled south by the old trail which lay along the foothills. Le Nouse and his party were bound for Fort Standoff: "Blackjack" and "Lemon" headed for Tobacco Plains (a large R.O. Mission in Montana), so they separated.

The two prospectors were supposed to have gone up High River and over the mountains by an old and plain trail used by the Indians from Tobacco Plains who drove large bands of horses into what is now Alberta every fall and drove them back again loaded with Pemmican. "Blackjack" and "Lemon" were panning the rivers as they proceeded. They followed showings of gold to the head of a mountain stream. There they found rich diggings from grass roots to bed rock, about five feet. They sank two pits, and in bringing their horses in from picket, accidentally found the ledge from which the gold came – a ledge of decomposed quartz. French, who saw samples of this rock at Ft. Benton, described it as resembling a body of gold with little rock shot into it. The sample of placer was coarser than anything ever found in the placer gulches of the Northern States, on display in a window that winter in Helene. Is it any wonder that many men then young and in their prime, spent the rest of their lives in a useless search for this Eldorado? French was one of these.

In the camp that night the two adventurers had a disagreement as to whether or not they should stake the find and return in the spring. One favored this – the other opposed it. The argument finally terminated in "Lemon" killing his partner with an axe as he lay in his blanket. However such he might have wished to flee from the scene of

the tragedy, he could not do so until daylight and so he built a huge fire and with his gun on his arm he marched back and forth all night. Little did he think that two pairs of human eyes watched him and had witnessed the entire tragedy. Two young Stoney braves, William and Daniel Bendow had followed the pair, had watched them sink the holes and saw them panning the gravel and were waiting for what these strange white men might do on the morrow.

As the night wore on "Lemon" was half crazed with the thought of the terrible deed he had done in his passion, and the Indians with their dim sense of humor, whistled occasionally to further distress the unfortunate "Lemon". With the first streak of dawn he mounted the big roan horse that French had given him and took the trail across the mountains. The Indians packed up what was left, camp outfit, grub, rifle, etc., and taking the two remaining horses started to Morleyville to report to their chief, "Bearpaw". He must have been such interested as he swore them never to reveal to any person the location of what they witnessed. It is not uncommon for whites to commit perjury, but no Indian was known to do so.

Many of those in late years who endeavored to locate the Lemon Mine know how religiously those two sons of the mountains kept their oath. Many bands of horses and herds of cattle, fortunes in themselves, to these people, have time and time again been offered, but that strange fear of the penalties prescribed by that terrible oath rose up before them and they both died with the secret locked in their breasts.

I know them both well and travelled and camped with them in the mountains. They were splendid types of the old Indian Chieftain, heads of a large following of their own progeny, ruling their little kingdom with kindness and with wisdom. How I admired this type of Indian – their dignity, their independence, their kindliness to their own people, their deep knowledge of nature. That book which is closed to so many contained valuable and interesting secrets.

But to go on with the story – "Lemon" arrived at the Mission of Tobacco Plains and at once confessed his crime to the Priest, whom he had known the preceding winter. He had with him the gold they had saved on the day of the killing, also a sample of the rock which they had found. He seemed half crazed and his crime weighed heavily upon him. There was a man at the mission by the name of John McDougald, a man well versed in mountain travel, whom the priest dispatched to the scene of the tragedy, on instruction by "Lemon" as to the location of it. McDougald found the place, buried "Blackjack" and built a mound of stones over the grave to keep the wild animals from digging up the body and returned to Tobacco Plains. Later the Indian reported to "Bearpaw" the finding

of this mound of rock. He at once dispatched William and Daniel with orders to tear down the mound and scatter the stones. This they did, and the last trace of a bloody murder was removed from the face of mother earth. How well she has hidden her secret ever since in spite of all efforts to uncover it! The Indians were ordered to hunt no more in this locality, nor to see the trail. Mountain trails that are not used soon become impassable and so this trail is not used today – unless it may be one of those opened up in late years by forest rangers.

"Lemon" spent the winter with his spiritual friend, the priest, and although he acted strangely at times, he was for the most part sane enough, and so during the long winter a party was formed and equipped to start in the spring and work the prospect.

The party comprised twelve good men with Lemon to lead them. As soon as the snow made it possible to travel, a start was made – but they were not alone. All the miners who had wintered in that part of the country had heard of the rich find and were filled with hope of much gold to be found. They formed a large party – about seventy-five men – and they followed “Lemon” and his men.

They camped at Crow’s Nest Lake and proceeded north from there, and “Lemon” camped the party somewhere about six miles from the original find. This was necessary in order to get grass for the large bunch of horses they had. “Lemon” and his party camped some little distance from the main body, and early next morning, leaving two men in camp to look after it, and to kill deer, they started – followed of course by the other party. “Lemon” was unable to locate the place, and after a fruitless search he concluded he had taken the wrong gulch. This would not go down with those who had followed him, and they accused him of trying to throw them off and threatened to lynch him. He mounted his horse and ran back to camp where he became violently insane. His own party stood guard over him all night and in the morning started back over the mountains. They reached Tobacco Plains and “Lemon”, although he had lucid intervals, he never fully recovered his reason. He lived for many years with his brother who was a cattle rancher in the state of Texas.

So ended the first expedition – and so have ended many more. Everyone has been unsuccessful and many of them tragic.

Next year the Priest outfitted another party from Tobacco Plains. This was to have as its leader, McDougald, the man who buried “Blackjack”. McDougald, who was at Fort Benton, was to meet the party at Crow’s Nest Lake – in this party was his wife and family. They were to proceed north from there. He left Benton to keep the appointment, but at Fort Kipp (a whiskey trading post), he drank so much booze it killed him and the party waited at Crow’s Nest Lake for weeks before hearing of the death of their leader, and so they turned back.

Next year another large party was equipped and got as far as the Lake when mountain fires burns all the timber and grass and they were forced to abandon the enterprise.

The year following the Priest sent a small party under the guidance of “Lemon”, but on nearing the place he went mad again and they were forced to take him back.

It would appear that the Priest now gave up the quest, but it was taken up by others. One of these was the first Lemon party – a man by the name of Nelson – but after a summer’s useless search, the party disbanded, but each man continued an independent search. It is true that John Lee of Pincher Creek (the original of the prospectors), and French, were associated for several years, but finally French followed a lone trail. Sickness soon overtook him back in the quietness of the hills and he was barely alive when he finally reached my ranch on the head of Willow Creek. There he was nursed back to health and the next spring saw him again ready and eager to renew the search.

It was about this time that it began to enlist my curiosity as to what he was looking for, and slowly and gradually he told me the story as I have set it down here. He began by showing me a rough pen and ink sketch of rivers and mountain ranges and at the head of a stream with three forks was an “X”. He told me that the map was made by “Lemon” and that mark was the Lemon Mine – the richest thing ever found in the Rocky

Mountains. He told me that that was the reason he had come to Alberta and said he would continue the search as long as he lived. From that time, until his death fifteen years later, I, along with the late George Emerson, was associated either directly or indirectly with him in his prospecting.

From him I learned the Indian trails, the passes and the camping grounds – learned how to pack, to travel, and to love the silent mountains, and so, though I found no gold, I can truthfully say now that as the shadows lengthen year by year, that I have found something that gold cannot buy.

French went about his work methodically – he was in fact the most methodical man I have ever known. He spent some months in the 90's with the two survivors of the several expeditions that had come in the country. He even had one of them come by pack train to Crow's Nest Lake and then north in an endeavour to have this man identify some of the land marks or the distance travelled by the first expedition headed by "Lemon". He kept La House and his band of half-breeds in the winter of 1885, so as to check up in the spring and to find out where "Lemon" and "Blackjack" parted company with him – La House going to Fort Kipp and the two prospectors to Tobacco Plains. He and John Lee fed William and his retinue one winter at Lee's ranch on Pincher Creek, and in the spring put twenty-five horses and twenty-five cattle in a pasture to be the property of Stoney William when he showed them the location of the killing. On the second day of the expedition, William said he could go no further – the terrors of that oath came over him and the expedition was abandoned. Only a few years before French's death, he made a bargain with the same William to show him the place he had looked for so long. William and his band were on their way to Morley and agreed to camp at the old George Sage place – an abandoned ranch on the middle fork of High River, until French could get George Emerson and myself to join them. That night William died suddenly. His people secured a Red River cart and proceeded with his body to Morleyville. The night of their arrival his son-in-law also died without any warning. Is it any wonder that the Indians believe there is a hex on anyone who tries to locate that place? In fact, old Indians refuse to talk about it and literally freeze up when the name is mentioned.

French was terribly burned in a fire that destroyed the Emerson house on the night of his return from his last prospecting trip. On the evening of his return he wrote on a letter and posted it at the Bar U. In it he said that he had at last located IT, and was coming to High River the following day and tell me everything. On his arrival he was unable to talk to me and died, and so if he had really solved the problem which had occupied so many years of his life, the secret died with him.

Many attempts have been made since that time. The next notable of which took place in 1929. Many there are who say "nothing will be found on this side of the mountain" – but geologists designate a tract of country between Crow's Nest Lake and Mist Mountain on the head waters of the Highwood River, as the disturbed area in which precious metals might be found. In my opinion if the Lemon Mine is ever found it will be in this territory, which is really a trough of the Cretaceous sea, bounded on the west by the Paleozoic limestone of the main range of the Rockies, and on the east by the Livingstone range, also of limestone. This trough is now a north and south valley transversely cut by three watersheds of the Sheep Creek, Highwood, and Old Man rivers. The area is rich in coal, some low grade phosphate rock, and low grade deposits of iron. There are intercalated beds of conglomerate rock, a hard green rock, securing chiefly in

the south and known as the Crow's Nest Volcanoes. It is call the disturbed area because the beds of sandstone and shale, cradled between the ranges, are often found pitched on edge or as inverted cylinders. The most remarkable feature both within and without the mountains, is that both main streams and inconsiderable streams occupying wide valleys flow on traverse strike lines rather than north and south. Yet nowhere on these streams have colors of gold ever been found, though it is safe to say, everyone has been prospected by someone at some time or other since the finding of the Lemon Mine.

If one were to give credence to stories that drifted down from the early days, the search for this mine has claimed more than Blackjack's life. There is the story of a white man's skeleton found in the gap of the Old Man River, and with a bag of gold. This it the story of two men badly wounded stopping over night in the 90's at a ranch in the foothills. They carried gold dust and were fleeing from the West. They rode away next morning for Fort McLeod, but never arrived. Had they re-discovered the lost Lemon Mine and then were followed and killed by Indians?

From time to time old mounds are found, the remains of cabins, old rusted muzzle-loading guns and I.G. Baker tin containers date these. But a man in the mountains does not abandon his outfit.

The Ballad of the Lost Lemmon Mine
By Alfred Bains
(Source: Museum of the Highwood)

There's a story told, of some long lost gold,
in the mountains off to the west.
That's been handed down, by men of renown,
Who have gone to their well earned rest
But the tale at most, is like a ghost,
that haunts one like a goad.
To take to the trail, to no avail,
to seek that hidden lode.

2

So rich in pay, I've heard them say,
it was gold shot through with rock.
Be this the truth or lie, many would not try,
its secrets to unlock.
These mountains still, in their silence will,
Reveal no sign of gold.
So by request I'll do my best
this legend to unfold.

3

It was back sometime, around sixty nine,
From Alder Gulch set forth,
Lemon and Blackjack with their pack,
headed their horses north.
Their luck to seek, in a British creek,
a brand new strike to find.
To reimburse, their empty purse,
if fate would be so kind.

4

Their grubstake got, from a friend whose lot,
was to play a prominent part.
In this story old, of the search for gold,
That gripped him from the start.
By staking these two Lefayette French knew,
That if ever they struck any pay.
He'd get his full share, by a bond that was there,
So he sent them on their way.

5

North they bore to the Saskatchewan's shore,
As far as they could go.
For there they panned, the rivers sand,

That only would color show.
So back they came, the route the same,
As the upwards one they took;
Until they spied the prairie wide,
That had that Indian look.

6

To save their hair from the Blackfoot there,
Who could be lurking around.
To the hills they took to have a look,
and be on safer ground.
Through the hills they went, to the mountains bent
Up over the Sentinel pass.
Their steep trail led to a dry creek bed.
A hard ride from pasturing grass.

7

On the south there appeared a mouth
of a creek coming in from the west
So thirsty and tired, from that long ride
They stopped to have a rest
The grass was good, where the horses stood
and grazed that alpine meadow.
The water cool, in a deep clear pool
Within the forest shadow

8

Their fears were laid, so on they stayed
To prospect with new hopes
The Livingston banks on the flanks
of these mountains rugged slopes.
On one of these, above the trees
high up in that rough terrain
Their eyes could gaze through the distant haze
out to the open plain.

9

There by the side of a talus slide,
half hid by a calcite dyke.
They stared in awe at the vein they saw
Then they made their fabulous Strike.

Of free gold ore the both of them swore
That in all the camps they'd been.
From Carson Hill to Barkerville
They never the like had seen.

10

You will be perplexed, when you hear that next,
And wonder at their game.
With riches in sight they started a fight,
over whether to stake a claim.
Why a simple thing like this would bring,
two pals to bitter strife.
With reason spent to then attempt,
to take the others life.

11

Armed with a broad axe from their packs
Lemon swung a blow.
To Blackjack's head, who then fell dead
onto the rocks below.
That made a handy place to cover the trace,
of this foul act, and hide.
His partner's bones under the stones,
high up on the mountain side.

12

Taking a sample of ore to the camp he tore,
Insane with remorse and there,
He packed his horse, then set a course
to the south and a mission's care.
A Catholic Father took the bother
To help, and restore his mind;
And as time past, he could at last,
His rational moments find.

13

We leave Lemon at rest with the mission's best;
And go back to the scene of the crime.
Where it seemed that none, but the wind and the sun,

were witnesses at that time.
But there at the edge, of a timbered ledge
Four beady eyes peered out.
With a stoic stare, saw the whole affair,
of the white man's crazy bout.

14

Now these two Stonies rushed to their ponies,
and high tailed it back to their chief.
To tell Moses Bearpaw, just what they saw,
of this bloody fight so brief.
Moses was afraid, that the blame would be laid,
on the Indians camped around.
So he made them return, to erase and to burn
all the evidence there to be found.

15

Then to secrecy swear, all those that were there,
And never to ever reveal.
The site of this place or a curse they would face
That he placed on there as a seal.
Now the Bearpaw band had taken the stand,
down through the years to hold.
This secret well, and to no man tell,
of the place of the hidden gold.

16

Down across the line French heard of the mine.
Saw the ore that Lemon brought back.
Then he arranged to ride, with Lemon as guide,
to try and find the track.
That led to the ground that Blackjack had found
and the golden wealth it contained.
But the only clue, to the secret French Knew,
Lay in the memory that Lemon retained.

17

They were followed by a bunch, who had a hunch,
that they'd get in on the find.
But they didn't know, what fate would bestow,
due to the state of Lemon's mind.

He headed north west, and then did his best,
his old trail to them locate;
And to keep his pledge, to find the lost ledge,
That sealed his partner's fate.

18

His memory failed, as on they trailed,
their search to continue on.
To a creek they came, that had no name.
And there he was set upon.
They told him fair, they'd hang him there
if he didn't show them his course.
So in panic and fright, he sneaked out that night
and stole their fastest horse.

19

The theft of this steed in his moment of need,
gave Race Horse creek its name;
And from there they chased poor Lemon who raced
Back by the way that he came.
He out distanced the lot, and then finally got,
to the safety of his mission home;
And in the good priest's care, we leave him there,
For the mountains he'd never more roam.

20

French left in the lurch, continued the search,
by himself on the trail he would stay.
Till the Highwood he struck, without any luck;
then to the Crossing he made his way.
He established a post and there he played host
to the Indians around him camped.
There he heard of the curse, that couldn't be worse,
that on this ground was stamped.

21

For years he would try, the secret to pry,
from the Stonies who knew of the place.
He knew Indians well, but they never would tell,
in fear of the curse they would face.

And try as he might, they would throw no light,
on where Lemon had picked up that ore.
Then without fail, he'd taken to the trail,
in spite of the curse that it bore.

22

Once more he decided with a grubstake provided,
by Dan Riley who knew him of old.
To try once again, to discover the vein
that held that free milling gold.
In the company of Bearspaw along with his squaw
it appears that something was found.
For on the way back, stayed in Emerson's shack,
which that night was burned to the ground.

23

In his underwear clad, which was all that he had,
to withstand the wind and the cold;
He took sick in his race, to the Bedingfeld place,
and from there sent the news that was told.
To Riley who in haste, which not a moment to waste,
got French to a hospital bed.
But all he could say was "I've found the pay"
and then poor French was dead.

24

Many years from this day, the secret then lay.
in the mind of a very old squaw.
Who in Moses' wife, though she lived a long life
she never revealed what she saw.
Although her son King, the pressure would bring,
to tell him of what she knew.
But she never would tell, for she believed full well,
her old husband's curse to be true.

25

For years King tried never believing French lied,
when he said he had found something good.
But his search always failed, for his mother prevailed,
that the secret she'd keep; and withstood.

Every effort to get, from her lips that were set,
in silence to honor her pledge.
Some clue to the spot, where French said he got,
some gold from that fabulous ledge.

26

Time and again I would ask her in vain
as she sat on the floor of our store.
No English she spoke, but my request would provoke
stony silence and a glance out the door.
She was very old then, near one hundred and ten,
and her memory clear as a bell.
But her head shook, I could tell by her look
what a tale that old lady could tell.

27

Now the story I've told, of the search for this gold,
known as The Lost Lemon Mine;
Has been told to me true, by old timers I knew,
and the facts I've not changed by a line.
It's a legend I know, but I'd advise if you go
in search of this long hidden lode.
Don't think of the curse, or then you'll reverse
your decision to take to the road.