

Rod Lentz
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Harts Pass-Chancellor-Barron Roads

Road Names/Numbers:

Harts Pass Road, FS 5400, from County Road 1163 at Lost Creek to Harts Pass
Chancellor Road, FS5400-600, from Harts Pass to the former Chancellor campground on
Canyon Creek
Barron Road, FS 5400-734, from Chancellor Road to Barron and patented lands

History

The Slate Creek mining district includes Ruby, Canyon and Slate Creek Drainages. Gold placer deposits were discovered in the district in the 1870's—on lower Canyon Creek—when access was from British Columbia (Hodges, 1897). Moen (1969) reports that trails were constructed into the district from the Skagit and Methow drainages in 1894 after the discovery of the Eureka lode deposits in Bonita Creek. A few years later the trail from Ventura (mouth of Lost Creek on the Methow River) to Hart's Pass was a 26-inch-wide narrow gauge wagon road. By 1903 the road was widened to 36 inches and extended to the mining town of Barron, on Bonita Creek (Moen, 1969). However, in November, 1899, survey notes for the Combination Placer Claim (Mineral Survey 526) describe the Barron Road as “a narrow gauge wagon road 4 ft. wide” where it crosses the claim just west of Benson Creek.

The Combination Placer mineral survey and notes do not describe a road (or trail) extending from the Barron Road through the claim and on down Slate Creek to Canyon Creek (the existing road switchbacks within the claim). Such a trail is shown on Hodges 1897 map and on another Slate Creek Mining District map dated 1899 (Moen, 1969). The 1899 map also shows a trail crossing the slope above the Combination and extending to Slate Creek via the Goat mine.

A millsite known as the Chancellor was located September, 1905 near the confluence of Slate and Canyon Creeks. A water powered generator was placed on this site to power the New Light mine and mill--formerly the Eureka then Bonita mine (Bainbridge, 1977). Mineral survey notes for the millsite, dated November, 1905, described the travel way as a “wagon road 6 ft. wide between North American Mine and Robinson Creek [on Methow River].” The notes also describe a bridge across Canyon Creek for the North American Mine Road which was 12 feet wide and 105 feet long. Surely this road followed the existing alignment to Harts Pass and beyond. Therefore, the Chancellor trail from Barron was widened into and used as a road some time prior to November 1905.

The exploration of the Azurite Mine in Mill Creek resulted in the reconstruction of the Harts Pass and Chancellor roads and the new construction of a narrow gauge road from the Chancellor Road beginning just upstream from the South Fork Slate Creek, some 11 miles to the mine over Kady Pass. Continued development of the Azurite mine and renewed interest in the New Light mine at Barron probably spurred the reconstruction of

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the Harts Pass Road at least to Barron to accommodate conventional vehicles (Moen, 1969).