

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Craig Cabin
other names/site number Old Gold Miner's Cabin; 48SU2133

2. Location

street & number Approximately 4 miles east of Dell Creek and Jack Creek ☐ not for publication
city or town Bondurant ☒ vicinity
state Wyoming Code WY county Sublette code 035 zip code 82922

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Craig Cabin
Name of Property

Sublette County, WY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public – Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
1		sites
1	2	structures
1		objects
5	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single dwelling, secondary structure

Recreation and Culture: Outdoor recreation.

Industry/Processing/Extraction: extractive facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: Single dwelling, secondary structure

Recreation and Culture: Outdoor recreation.

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: log cabin

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: none

walls: Log

roof: Tar paper

other:

Narrative Description

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Craig Cabin site is a historic period, early to mid-20th century gold mining and outfitting camp containing two main log buildings and various structures nestled among the heavy old growth conifers near Jack Creek in northern Sublette County, Wyoming. The cabins occupy a high, dry, strategically located terrace at the base of the Sawtooth Mountain of the Gros Ventre Range in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The property is situated overlooking an unspoiled riparian community of beaver ponds, willows, spruce and lush grasses. The property commands an impressive view of the 1,500 ft. high, sheer cliffs of the Sawtooth Mountain. It is located between the Water Dog Lakes and lower Jack Creek to the east and west, and blocked by the Gros Ventre Range to the north. The rather spectacular views and intact ecosystem compliment the unspoiled historical setting of the site, producing a landscape of historical importance and unspoiled natural beauty.

The locale is well documented in nineteenth and twentieth century historic records and local folklore. Examination of the 1892 Government Land Office (GLO) survey maps of the area document an "Indian Trail" following upper Jack Creek (then known as Lynx Creek on the GLO) east from the site area toward the Green River Drainage. This trail passed to the north of the Craig Cabin property. Ethnographer D.B. Skimkin (1947) documented Indian trails in this area. Later other prehistorians (Vlcek, 1995; Tanner, et. Al. 1997) researched Native American use areas and trade routes in the region.

Five resources on the property are considered contributing to the nomination: The main log building, a log tack shed, an upright sluice box, a water diversion ditch and head gate, and a historic midden/trash dump. Noncontributing resources on the property include two pole corrals and two modern outhouses. The property is located on land managed by the United States Forest Service. The previous and current owners have maintained the buildings in their original condition.

The Craig Cabin is historically significant because of its association with three important Euro-American economic activities in early Wyoming state history: fur trapping, mineral extraction, and western outfitting. No other known site in Wyoming reflects these combined themes. This site also retains a high quality of preservation, integrity of setting, location, and historical association.

Narrative Description

The Craig Cabin property encompasses the two main buildings, resources related to gold mining along Prospector Creek and its beaver ponds, water diversions, outlying features and the near pristine setting of the overall site area. The total area for the property is approximately 4.1 acres, or 32,500 square feet.

Jack Craig attempted to mine for gold using a common method known as "placer mining." Gold, and other precious metals and gemstones, are often found in alluvial deposits – deposits of sand and gravel in modern or ancient stream beds, or occasionally glacial deposits. Since gems and heavy metals like gold are considerably more dense than sand, they tend to accumulate at the base of placer deposits.

Craig diverted water from Prospector Creek to one large, main sluice box where gold-bearing deposits could be separated from the Creek's sediments. This was a common gold mining method in the Rocky Mountains starting in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing well into the twentieth century. The large permanent sluice box still remains intact on the eastern portion of the property, fed by a 100 meter long diversion ditch. Three other portable sluice boxes are found in the site vicinity, attesting to the practice of horse-packing to other placer mines in the Jack Creek/Prospector Creek area. The Craig Cabin also houses tin pans originally used by Craig for gold prospecting.

Contributing Resources:

There are four contributing resources at the site: 1. the main log building, 2. a log tack shed, 3. an upright sluice box, 4. the diversion ditch and head gate, and 5. a historic midden/trash dump.

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

Resource 1 is a one and a half story log building. The exact construction date of the building is unknown, though it is believed to be built sometime between 1898 and 1900. The logs used in the construction of the cabin and tack shed were hauled by horse and wagon from a water-powered saw mill on Dell Creek, three miles distant. The main log building (resource 1) measures 29' 6" N/S x 21' 6" E/W. The main entrance is via a vertical wood plank door on the east elevation, and a six-pane fixed window is also present on this elevation. A wood plank door covered with plywood sheeting is present on the north gable end. Two six-pane fixed windows are present on the west elevation, and a six-pane fixed window is present on the south gable end. The peeled, rounded logs are chinked with split poles and cement with square notched logs with sawn log ends. The first story is bisected with an interior wall separating the kitchen and entryway from a larger dining/living area. The second story is a loft space accessed from the lower floor by a stairway adjacent to the room dividing wall and the loft has a single pane fixed window on both the north and south gable ends. The medium pitched gable roof has rolled tar paper covering one inch thick wood planks which lay on nine purlins. There are two metal stove pipes exiting the roof on the west slope of the gable roof. (GPS: 43 14.430 N, 110 16.218 W)

Resource 2 is a log tack shed, constructed in the same style as the main building, but only one story high. It is also believed to have been erected sometime between 1898 and 1900. It measures 17' by 12'6" and is 8' high. This building also has square corner notches with sawn log ends and cement chinking on the west elevation and wood slat chinking on the remaining walls. The single vertical wood plank door is located on the west elevation with a single window on the north and south gable ends. The low pitch gable roof has rolled tar paper covering one inch thick wood planks which rest on five purlins. Today, the building is used as a tack shed, a use compatible with the historical function of the building and property.

Both buildings have been well maintained. The roof on the resource 1 has been repaired with additional rolled tar roofing, similar to the original used. A few rotted logs have been replaced with similar logs from the area. No structural changes or maintenance work has been done to alter the original structures. For the building's age, minimal maintenance has been required and they have held up well in the Wyoming weather for over 100 years. (GPS: 43 14.426 N, 110 16.206 W)

Resource 3 is a permanent upright sluice box located adjacent to the constructed ditch. This sluice box is built out of milled lumber and measures 24' long and 2' wide. It extends from the ditch and projects northward over the terrace edge. Water from the ditch currently flows down the box. The date of the construction for this resource is unknown. (GPS: 43 14.392 N, 110 16.154 W)

Resource 4 is the 100 meter long water diversion ditch and head gate that carries water to an upright sluice box. It was dug to divert water out of the creek and into the sluice box for the placer mining operation. (Head gate GPS: 43 14.359 N, 110 16.073 W)

Resource 5 is an historic midden/trash dump. Excavations in the trash midden could recover stratigraphic layers of historical significance spanning most, if not all, of the site's period of historical significance. It is felt that the historic period archaeological potential of the trash midden would document details of the site's ongoing occupation, and shed important light on elements of site significance. However, the midden/dump has never been tested, nor recommended for excavation.

Noncontributing Resources:

Noncontributing resources on the property are two modern pole corrals and two modern outhouses.

The two pole corrals are of buck pole construction. The main corral is in the northwest portion of the property and has two pens. This corral system measures approximately 110' E/W x 90' N/S. The second corral is located in the southwest portion of the property and measures approximately 50' in diameter.

Outhouse 1 is located adjacent to the ditch and is currently used as a shower. It is constructed from vertically placed milled lumber planks with two 55 gallon drums placed on top of the four sided structure. There is no roof on this structure.

Outhouse 2 is located to the southeast of corral #2 and was constructed out of small diameter logs with overlapping log ends. The "2-holer" outhouse measures 4'2"x 6'6" and has a gable roof with rolled a tar paper covering. Both corrals and

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

outbuildings are considered modern resources that are currently used in the daily operation of the outfitting camp. They do not detract from the historic setting or character of the property.

The 1892 Government Land Office (GLO) maps of the site area identify an Indian Trail passing through the site area. While no direct evidence or artifacts of the Indian Trail exists today, its past presence underscores the long-term historical and geographic significance of the area.

Seasonally, temporary structures are erected for the outfitting business. These summer set-ups for the business include a sauna, several wall tents used by guests and several painted canvass tipis erected in recent years. The tipis are an interesting modern addition to the property and add historic character, warmth and charm and reflect the use of the general area by Native Americans. The tipis are constructed and painted with ethnographic accuracy and the "main" tipi is preserved as a communal lodge containing authentic replicas of many Plains Indian material culture tools, regalia, weaponry and domestic artifacts. Because these structures are temporary and erected on a seasonal basis, they are not included as part of this nomination.

Craig Cabin
Name of Property

Sublette County, WY
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/Settlement

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

Circa 1898-1966

Significant Dates

1902

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance begins in 1898 when it is believed that the Craig Cabin and Tack Shed were built. It was initially built to house trappers working in the surrounding mountain streams. The buildings were soon repurposed to be the headquarters for gold mining. The site was again repurposed after World War II as an outfitting business. Given that the site continues to be used to the present for an outfitting business, and that there is no clear event ending the significance of the site, the end date is considered to be 1966, using the 50 year rule for historic properties.

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

History of the Craig Cabin and surrounding buildings:

The Craig Cabin and tack shed are believed to be constructed by an early trapper from Salt Lake City, Utah, and his two nephews sometime between 1898 and 1900. Typical of the time, these buildings were erected on public domain land prior to the establishment of the U.S. Forest Service. A homestead entry had not been filed for the construction of the Craig Cabin. The individuals who built these structures did so without the knowledge or approval from the General Land Office, who controlled public domain lands at that time. The three men, whose names are unknown, used the cabin as personal housing while trapping fur animals in area rivers and streams. One fall, believed by locals to be around 1900, the uncle left the cabin with the furs to sell with plans to return with supplies. He never came back and it is not known what became of him. With their supplies depleted, the younger nephews somehow made it through the deep snows that winter to a local ranch in Bondurant where they arranged for their return to Salt Lake City. They never came back to the area, abandoning the cabin. This information is hearsay, yet comes from the oral histories from older individuals, Jake Pfisterer and Eileen Fronk Dockham, who were born and raised in the area. They knew Jack Craig and the area history.

Jack Craig, also from Salt Lake City, moved into the cabin about 1902 and it has since been known as the Craig Cabin, though he did not build it. While living in the cabin, Jack Craig took out his first gold claim at this site. He claimed to be successfully mining for gold and sold shares to his gold mine. To advertise the sale of his gold shares he purchased commercial air time and had advertisements broadcasted from a radio station in Mexico, transmitting unencumbered by the U.S. Federal Communication Commission (FCC) regulations. This was the only broadcast that could be heard in the West at the time. Craig successfully sold Wall Street-type stocks, or shares, in this "gold mine," though gold was never actually realized here. Eileen Fronk Dockham was recorded in 1992 as saying about Jack Craig, "I was old enough to remember what he did. He planted gold nuggets. He had them in a jar saying he'd got them from Jack Creek, but we knew better. If there had been (gold there), we'd have got them before then."

According to J.D. (Sam) Drucker, BLM Archaeologist Pinedale Office, the geological maps of the Craig Cabin area show no gold bearing formation on the GIS layers. This geological knowledge was not as well known in Craig's time, enabling him to claim to be finding gold without scientific challenge. It was not uncommon during this time in history for men such as Craig to claim to be finding gold to capitalize on monetary investments.

Jack Craig is remembered by the locals for not getting along with his neighbors. Craig only stayed at the Bondurant area cabin during the summers, returning to Salt Lake City every winter. Oral interviews recall how Craig would often hide in area willows with his gun, threatening to shoot anyone who came near him. He also diverted most of the water in Jack Creek for his gold mining efforts, depriving ranchers who had water rights to the creek below Craig of their irrigating water. When these ranchers came to claim their water, Craig successfully ran them off at gun point. The ranchers later returned with their guns, and the area became known for its water wars. Somehow, no one was injured or killed. Craig's only access to his cabin was through the ranchers' yards that he had terrorized at gun point, at times on their own land. Eileen Fronk Dockham recalls a time in the middle of the night when Craig came knocking on their cabin door because his automobile had become stuck in the creek in their ranch yard. Eileen's father got out of bed, harnessed his team, and pulled Craig's car out of his creek, likely to get rid of him.

Sometime later, Craig built his own access road going around the ranch yards, which was a relief to those ranchers. This road was graded well enough to allow access by Model T's and Model A's throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Parts from these vehicles remain in the Craig Cabin area. The U.S. Forest Service no longer wanted this road used, so closed it and it is no longer passable.

Jack Craig took out his last gold mine claim on Jack Creek in 1939. Shortly thereafter, Craig left the area. Sometime after World War II, the U.S. Forest Service lease was then taken up by Arthur "Banty" Bowlsby. He transitioned the primary use of the Craig Cabin away from gold mining to outfit nonlocals into the Gros Ventre Wilderness and adjacent Forest Service lands for hunting, fishing and sightseeing excursions. Guests at the Craig Cabin, though, occasionally still found gold. This would have been glacier gold; flakes that had melted off the high country glaciers and found its way into Jack Creek

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

or other area creeks. Bowlsby also built a water-powered sawmill on East Dell Creek, using gravity fed water diverted from the creek. Located behind the Little Jenny Ranch in Bondurant, the sawmill produced much of the cut boards used in the construction of Bondurant and area ranch buildings in the 1940s and 1950s. Bowlsby's three sons help Banty with the outfitting operation, especially middle son Raymond. When Raymond enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to Vietnam in the late 1960s, Banty sold his permit. According to U.S. Forest Service historian J. Schoen, "The first recorded use of this site as an outfitting camp is a special use permit issued by the Forest Service to J. Wells of Sublette County in January 1971. In December of 1971 the permit was sold to Tom Mollring who operated from the cabin until 1986 at which time the permit was sold to Bill Webb."

Tom Mollring continued the practice of taking guests throughout the summer and hunters in the winter. The introduction of snow machines came at this time, but Mollring used them only for personal use and didn't add winter guests. The cabin was affectionately referred to as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" when Mollring owned it by his local relations, the Percy's. Mollring also refiled on gold claims at the Craig Cabin site and surrounding area. With a partner, Joel Hartmeister, they renovated the diversion ditch and maintained the sluice box, but again, never successfully extracted gold. Hartmeister and Mollring operated the CT Pack Ranch together, and through this business, Hartmeister brought higher-end, higher paying guests to the Craig Cabin.

In 1976, Bill Webb came to the camp at first to enjoy the company and surrounding area, but soon was helping Mollring with the outfitting operation. After expenses were paid, Mollring and Webb split the profits 50/50, though they never got rich here. In 1986 Webb purchased the business from Mollring and has owned and operated it as an outfitting business to the present. Like the others, Webb took out some gold mine claims there, but he never took the time to try to prove up on them. Webb is in the process of selling the business to the Maiers who intend to also continue operating the site as an outfitting business.

As late as 1981, investors such as those associated with the Great Western Minerals Corporation in Casper, Wyoming, were still investing in gold mining operations in the area. Enough gold has been successfully mined in the surrounding area to make prospective investors believe their investment would prove to be lucrative. But gold was never successfully found in the immediate area around the Craig Cabin. Only what is known as "flour gold" for its flour-like texture was extracted from Jack Creek at the Craig Cabin site.

Recognizing the financial challenge of operating a seasonal business, Webb was the first outfitter at the Craig Cabin site to operate his business year around. In the summer his business, Green River Outfitters, offered day horseback riding excursions to the cabin and into the surrounding mountains. In the fall he takes out hunting clients, though unlike many outfitters in the area, he mostly offered smaller game hunting trips rather than the large trophy hunts. To enhance his business offerings, Webb uses an additional outfitting lease to set up temporary canvas tents to further service his clients in the summer and fall. In the winter, Webb started snowmobile trips from the Elk Horn in Bondurant to the Craig Cabin where guests enjoy a lunch and sauna. Most of his clients are private groups that come from the high end Jackson resorts. The guests are offered a trip literally back in time when they arrive at the Craig Cabin, which remains in its original state. On the logs, Elk and Moose antlers adorn the exterior of the structure in typical western style. The interior has also changed very little, with the original gold pans and portable sluice boxes hanging on the walls. Year around the guests are also offered the opportunity to take a (very cold) shower under the Bowlsby's water wheel originally built for his sawmill. The new owners, the Maiers, who are in the process of taking over the use of the cabins and business, plan to operate it as Webb has with no changes to the buildings.

The Craig Cabin site is an excellent representation of small yet important economic activities by Euro-Americans in the mountains of western Wyoming and throughout Wyoming from early territorial days until the present. These activities are fur trapping, prospecting for gold, and outfitting. This site has all the original buildings and contributing structures still intact, in relative good condition, and unchanged from its original construction. There are very few remaining original structures that were used by trappers, gold miners, and outfitters in Wyoming. This site was previously determined eligible by the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office in 1996. The site is on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Forest Service was involved with this original determination and is supportive of this nomination. The Craig Cabin is historically important because it is one of the very few original structures remaining in the Wyoming forests related to trapping, mining, and outfitting.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Craig Cabin
Name of Property

Sublette County, WY
County and State

The Craig Cabin Site is historically significant because of its association with three important Euro-American economic activities in early Wyoming state history: fur trapping, mineral extraction, and western outfitting. No other known site in Wyoming reflects these combined themes. This site also retains a high quality of preservation, integrity of setting and place and historical association.

Fur trapping in western Wyoming and throughout the west has been well-documented as an important factor to the white settlement in the area. While most of the early fur trappers came alone, many eventually stayed and were important contributors to the white developments in Wyoming. But not all stayed. Unknown numbers of trappers came to the area, trapped for a short period, and sometimes built a structure in the unclaimed forest. The property would later be managed by the US Forest Service, but this cabin existed prior to the government agency's development. This was likely the case for a trapper, not remembered to history, who built what would later be called the Craig Cabin in the Hoback Basin, for fur trapping activities, but failed to stay also for unknown reasons. Typical of this type of structure, though, it was taken up by another occupant, Jack Craig.

The mineral extraction industry drew thousands of people to the mountain of the American West with hopes of obtaining wealth. This was Jack Craig's hope when he moved into the abandoned trapper cabin in the Hoback Basin. His dreams of making a lot of money from his placer mine failed to materialize; but he came up with another way to make money from his gold mine – by selling shares to it. Craig's financial scheme appears to have been somewhat successful and he did make some money from his bogus business plan, though his financiers never profited from their investment. This, again, wouldn't have been an unusual event. There were enough mining success stories to lure investors, but many of them failed to profit from them.

Outfitting has been a long-time economic activity in western Wyoming. When the Craig cabin site was eventually abandoned for its gold mining activities, the place was once again repurposed, this time as the headquarters for an outfitting business. Of the three activities headquartered from this cabin, outfitting has been the only successful one.

Fur trapping, gold mining and outfitting are significant, important industries throughout Wyoming, and especially in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. By 1900, there were several small log cabins scattered throughout the forests of Wyoming prior to the creation of the U.S. Forest Service. Cabins were often constructed then used by fur trappers and precious minerals miners for a short period of time before being abandoned. Few of these hand-built buildings from that time period remain today. This is largely due to the U. S. Forest Service's policy in the 1950s through the 1970s of removing structures that were in trespass. "It was a common practice for the Forest Service to remove or burn these cabins because they were either no longer in use, the presented a hazard to the general public, or they were viewed as a management problem which was best handled by their removal," explains USFS historian, Jamie Schoen. Of those not purposely destroyed, most deteriorated over time due to the natural elements. The Craig Cabin is one of the few sites remaining that dates to the late 1800s and early 1900s."

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Trapping

"The fur trapping era of the early 1800s in the American West was a well-organized industry which involved a number of competing companies in the quest of beaver pelts for eastern markets. By 1840, this industry was seeing the last of the organized rendezvous as a result of over trapping the beaver populations and a significant change in the eastern markets which had once depended on a steady supply of beaver pelts. For the next thirty years, the mountains and valleys of northwest Wyoming became the center of attention for a number of government explorations. It wasn't until the 1870s that the hunter-trapper made his reappearance in the western Wyoming Mountains again." (Schoen).

This new trapper was of a different breed than the earlier types and operated on an individual basis without ties to well-established trapping companies. These trappers played a significant role in the settlement of the Jackson Hole area. Many of the individuals who came to Jackson Hole in the late 1800s to trap would eventually take up permanent residence and file homestead claims. Well known and documented trappers of this era who made a lasting imprint on the Jackson Hole area include Beaver Dick Leigh, John Holland, Albert G. Richards, and Dick Turpin.

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

It was a common practice for trappers to build cabins in the remote areas where they trapped. What is now the Bridger-Teton National Forest had dozens of these remote, all hand built cabins constructed and used for varying lengths by these trappers. In some cases, a trapper built several cabins because he had an extensive trapping line which took several days to check. In these cases, the trapper would have a number of way stations along the line for overnight stays. These were generally in the form of a crude line cabin or lean-to. Other trappers built a more permanent structure and used it as a base to trap rivers and streams in the surrounding areas. The Craig Cabin would be an example of this latter type of trapper cabin, and one of the very few remaining. It was built to be used as a base to trap the nearby rivers and streams, though it was only used by the trapper for a year or two then was abandoned. Again, typical of this type of structure, it was re-purposed when another person, Jack Craig, moved into it, and used it for his personal use and business: gold mining.

Gold Mining

Mining for precious metals is widely recognized as an important draw for people to come to the American West. Of particular interest was the mining for gold, and the lure of possible wealth from this activity led to what has been tagged "gold fever." The Gold Rush in California in 1849 spurred new mining interest throughout the West, including Wyoming.

The best known gold mining in Wyoming was at South Pass (South Pass City State Historic Site 48FR434). In 1866 gold was discovered in the vicinity, and a year later prospecting began on what would become the Carissa mine. Prospectors and adventurers quickly arrived and founded what is today known as South Pass City. Within a year the community's population had swelled to about 2,000. Within a decade the city's population shrank dramatically as the large gold deposits that had been hoped for failed to materialize. By 1870, most of the prospectors that had been at South Pass moved on to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

According to historian Merry Haydon, though, mining adventures on the National Forest System Lands did not play a major influence in shaping the early history of Wyoming. "The mining efforts conducted on the Forest are unique and depict a determined set of hardy prospectors and miners who had fortitude and perseverance to seek their dreams digging for their fortunes. If these miners would have struck it rich, most likely the pristine landscapes of these spectacular mountain ranges in western Wyoming would not be the world-class scenic attractions they are today and the history of western Wyoming would have turned out much differently," says Haydon.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest comprises about 3.4 million acres of land west of the Continental Divide in western Wyoming. The geologic processes creating the spectacular mountain ranges here formed mineral deposits that have been utilized by mankind since prehistoric times. Mineral resources such as obsidian, chert, and steatite were used during prehistoric times as is evident in the archaeological record. Journal entries made by some of the first European explorers include descriptions of the mineral resources they noted while traveling through the area. (Merry Haydon.)

There were various minerals mined in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The most common was coal, mostly on a small scale in these parts and referred to as "wagon mines." Oil and natural gas deposits were also mined in these mountains. Of particular interest for this study, though, is the mining for gold.

Gold Mining in the Bridger Teton National Forest has been documented throughout the histories of the area. It has been suggested that Charlie Davis and his partner were the first settlers in the Green River Valley, where they squatted in 1861, built a cabin, and mined for gold on one of the sources of North Beaver Creek, later in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. They gave up gold mining in a few years because the gold was too fine to collect.

The first recorded European explorer seeking valuable minerals in western Wyoming was Walter DeLacy who published accounts of his trip through Jackson Hole in 1876. According to Haydon, DeLacy came to this region from the gold fields of southwestern Montana and Colorado. He and a group of forty-three other hopeful gold prospectors made their way north along the Snake River into Jackson Hole. "He describes the trail they followed along the Snake River as 'little used.' DeLacy's prospecting party found a much better trail east of Jackson Lake and they 'panned' their way to Pacific Creek and the Buffalo River area. They left Jackson Hole no richer than when they entered the area."

The year following DeLacy's prospecting, George Phelps came into the region looking for gold, but met with the same results. According to the USFS historian Jamie Schoen, at the same time a large party of seventy three men under James Stuart had been prospecting on the Stinking Water (Shoshone) River. This party split up with one group coming over

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

South Pass, up the Green River and into Jackson Hole. This group continued north to the Two Ocean Pass area and on to the source of the Yellowstone. Apparently this group also failed to find significant quantities of gold.

Schoen also reports that on the flats east of the present day town of Moose there is an artificial ditch that directs water from the foothills on the east side of Jackson Hole onto the valley bottom. This area was called Ditch Creek by the early settlers, and was first described by a geologist named St. John in 1877 as being "constructed some six or seven years ago for the purpose of conveying water to some placer mines in the lower bottom level." He also reported "prospecting pits were found in several places in the valley, which is periodically resorted to by small parties and solitary individuals in quest of gold." The name Ditch Creek is still used for the drainage which flows into Jackson Hole from the Shadow Mountain area.

In 1882, General D.E. Sacket, who was with the Sheridan expedition, reported rich placer gold mines had been discovered and worked in Jackson Hole and on the Gros Ventre and Buffalo Fork River; however, his reports were highly exaggerated as no significant mineral wealth has ever been found in these areas.

The Green River area captured interest from gold miners in the late 1880s and early 1900s. According to Haydon, "limited gold mine exploration occurred along Miner Creek, Tosi Creek, Twin Creek, and other tributaries of the Green River." Miners may have been working along Miner Creek as early as the 1870s. Significant quantities of gold were never found.

Amanda Rees, in her report the "Upper Green River Valley Overview; A History of the Cultural Landscape" commissioned by the United States Forest Service, in 1991, also notes the early and ongoing efforts of gold mining in the area. Rees interviewed Holly Skinner, a local historian and gold prospector in the Green River Valley and in South Pass City. According to Skinner, the geology of the Upper Green River gives rise to opportunities for both placer and deep mining.

The Pixley brothers, George and Thead, arrived in the late 1880s and homesteaded at the Big Bend on the Upper Green. In 1890 their father, John, joined them. He died alone in the winter of 1892. It is possible that John Pixley and perhaps his sons prospected up Mill Creek and perhaps Clear Creek. There are tailings piles on these creeks, thought to be from the Pixleys' deep mining. On the western side of the Green River Valley on Klondike Hill, a family known as the Retels owned rights to a deep mine. Their mining success is not known.

Merry Haydon reports that "one of the more extensive mining projects in the northern part of the (Bridger-Teton) Forest was the Whetstone Mine that was developed in 1889. This mine was along Whetstone Creek, a tributary of Pacific Creek now within boundaries of the Teton Wilderness north of Jackson. The gold mining company had about \$50,000 worth of mining equipment at the mine, plus cabins and a saw mill. The mine owners, Harris Dunn & Co. made improvements to the Teton Pass Road in order to bring their mining equipment and a saw mill over the Pass to the mine. The mining company also operated a Ferry across the Snake River (known as Conrad Ferry). The mining venture went stale in 1897 when the mine manager absconded money and disgruntled stockholders liquidated the mine business."

Schoen notes that the early 1900s saw a flurry of mining exploration in the Jackson Hole area, including John Graul who started mining in 1916 and filed fifteen claims between 1916 and 1921, all of them in the northern part of the valley. It is not certain what Graul was mining for as all his claim records are of the same general wording mentioning "gold, silver and other precious metals." It is rather certain, though, that he never made a lot of money from these activities.

Haydon also reports that around 1900, 160-acre placer claims were filed up and down the Snake River, from Jackson Lake to Menors' Ferry. Miner "Uncle Jack" David lived in a crude cabin near Bailey Creek and prospected along the Snake River Canyon south of Jackson Hole. He died in 1911 and he didn't die a rich miner. Evidence of extensive placer mining is still visible along Bailey Creek. Placer mining also occurred in an area where Pine Creek flows into the Snake River. Placering for gold also occurred on Rock Creek, the Gros Ventre River, Jim Creek, Porcupine Creek, and Slide Creek near the turn of the century. Another mine and tailing pile was supposedly located on Mill Creek. George Pixley may have been the prospector who worked at the Mill Creek as well as Clear Creek. Gold mining throughout the state was on a decline by 1900.

There are reports of gold in the Pinedale Roundup as far back as 1905:

There are extensive deposits of placer gold on Rock creek and on the north fork of the Big Gros Ventre (Fish creek) the last named stream running thru immense beds of fold-bearing cement ...

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

There are a number of veins exposed on the upper Green river, which carry small values of gold and silver, and the great ledge of manganese which cuts thru from Jim creek across Porcupine creek and Green river, at the head of Slid creek, assays from \$4 to \$7 in gold almost anywhere. This ledge follows the contact between lime and granite, and is worth prospecting. (Pinedale Roundup, May 10, 1905.)

The article also discusses the finding of gold in "iron blowouts."

According to Skinner, there may also have been platinum and gold mining up Twin Creeks at the lower end of the forest and there were probably placer claims on Miner Creek. Miner Creek was worked in the 1920s by Tobe Huston and Morris or Norris Griggs. Haydon writes that one old cabin and ground-sluicing scars at the mine dated from earlier workings. Mr. Griggs built another cabin at the mine, did further ground-sluicing work along the bench, and dug several prospecting pits. In 1947 Mr. Huston purchased the claims from Mr. Griggs for \$3,000. Mr. Huston didn't do much work at the mine afterwards. In 1959, Joseph Huston still had mining claims for about 2,000 acres along Miner Creek and was interested in filing for homestead or agricultural entry on part of the mining claim land. Miner Creek is at the south end of the Gros Ventre Ranch, near The Rim that divides the Hoback River Basin from the Green River Basin. East of there, the Retels operated an underground gold mine near Klondike Hill.

Haydon reports that in a 1932 Jackson Hole newspaper article, the Flake Gold Recovery Company of Chicago announced the company had installed two Mendenhall Gold concentrators at their placer mine along the Snake River, about two miles south of Elk or present day Moran. Nine miners were employed at the mine at that time and Walter Mendenhall, inventor of the machine, was there to direct the mining operations. According to the newspaper article, this mine is the first location in the country to use the newly developed concentrators. The new concentrators extract about ninety-five percent of the gold and are far superior to other placing mining techniques. The newspaper article stated that the company had plans to begin mining operations on a large scale the following season and the number of mine workers could increase to 7,500 men. A company spokesman was quoted in the article saying, "we'll show this country something they have never seen before". There is no evidence that these plans were brought to fruition.

Snook Moore, a well-known early settler on Tosi Creek in the Upper Green River Valley, became typical of area settlers when he, too, took out gold claims. "He wanted to get a grubstake to do more prospecting for gold," wrote Richard D. Hecox in Memories of Kendall Valley. "He never found any."

Casual gold mining is occasionally documented in area memoirs. For example, Hayden H. Huston, in his Daniel, Wyoming, history books, recalls people such as Henry Jons who first came to what is now Sublette County in 1895 on a gold prospecting trip. He later moved to Daniel to ranch and raise a family. Huston recalls going on a camping trip with his father on Pinon Ridge during the depression years. On the trip his father "panned here and there looking for a gold mine," with no luck.

Willis Nelson Bartlett seemed to have better luck mining for gold in the Upper Green River Valley. According to historian Jonita Sommers, "Bartlett was nicknamed 'Slim' because he was very thin, likely due to not having enough food. Slim had a gold mine on Bartlett Creek, which is in the vicinity of Twin Creek and Rock Creek. He also had a claim on the Sweetwater near South Pass. Bartlett came to the Twin Creek area in the early 1920s and moved into an old tie hack cabin and used another one close by for storage. In his early years there he claimed to have been successful with a sophisticated system for mining the gold. Bartlett's mine tunnel was up the creek from the sluice box and stamp mill. He wheeled the ore from the tunnel to some log cribs or bins on the side of the hill with an ore car made from old mowing machine gear wheels that ran on some track. A 500 to 600 foot long trough hued out of logs carried the unhammered ore to the sluice box. He had a continuous-running chain pulling the ore along the trough, which was made from old, broken, rake teeth that ran over wheels made of blocks of wood and metal rods. The forty to fifty foot long and sixteen inches wide sluice box was hand hewn from a spruce tree along with hewing the outside to make it lighter and easier to move. The chain in the trough was driven by the overshot waterwheel, which was made from things he collected at the local ranches. He also built a stamp mill from things he had picked up at the ranches. Later, he used horses to power the chain and stamp mill. Slim would mine the ore in the tunnel and put it in the cribs on the hill during the winter. In the summer, he would wash the ore in the sluice box and put it through the stamp mill. About the only thing Slim bought was dynamite to use in the tunnel." According to the Richard Hecox's local memoirs, for years Bartlett would go to the George Franz's ranch in Daniel at the beginning of every haying season with one or two Bull Durham sacks full of gold. He would help Franz's put up his hay, and then return to his camp and gold claim. Bartlett said there was no gold in the Green River

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

above the mouth of Twin Creek, as he had panned as far as Green River Lake. After Bartlett died, the U.S. Forest Service burned his buildings and leveled his ore that had been hauled out of the mine and filled in his mine shaft with a bulldozer (Hecox, 1982).

During the Great Depression, some people turned to panning for gold or reworking old, abandoned mining claims, in desperate measures to supplement their poor incomes. Renewed interest in gold mining rose again in the late 1970s when the price of gold soared. There have been reports of gold mining along Miner Creek and applications for gold mining claims in the Pacific Creek area into the 1980s.

Modern mining activities on the northern end of the Bridger Teton National Forest are largely confined to placer claims and most of those occur in the river bottoms. Dry land dredging has occurred in several claims near the mouth of Crystal Creek. Gold mining along Cottonwood Creek has been going on for a while and the mining claims are still active.

Outfitting

Outfitting, or dude ranching, has been a long-time industry throughout Wyoming, especially in the western mountains of Teton and Sublette counties. Starting in Territorial times, outfitters have made a living by taking paying guests into the mountains to hunt for small and big game, and fishing in mountain lakes and streams. Western tourism dates to the years before the Civil War, but with the building of the western railroads and feeder stage lines and trail in the 1870s and 1880s the industry grew substantially. According to USFS historian Jamie Schoen, "The growth of this industry has its origins in the increasing popularity of the American West during the late 1800s and early 1900s when wealthy sports enthusiasts from the east coast and abroad traveled to the mountainous regions of northwest Wyoming in search of big game hunting opportunities."

During the late nineteenth century visitors started going to Sublette County and Jackson Hole for the big game hunts and to enjoy the spectacular scenery of the area. "In order to cater to these needs, a few local settlers and ranchers began to take on paying guests and offer guided hunting and fishing trips into the back country as a way to bolster their incomes from more traditional ranching activities," writes Schoen. "From these early roots, 'dude ranching' and the establishment of hunting lodges became a viable industry in northwest Wyoming."

Dude ranches and hunting lodges became the precursor of the outfitting industry. In order to accommodate the "dudes", ranchers added cabins and expanded the ranch house to serve as a dining hall for the guests. A number of dude ranches became established during the early 1900s and include such locations as the Bar BC Ranch, White Grass Ranch, and the Triangle X Ranch in Grand Teton National Park; and the Heart Six Ranch and Turpin Meadows Ranch in Buffalo Valley south of Yellowstone National Park.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest in particular has a long history of people using these beautiful mountains to host paying guests. Indeed, Wyoming's first full-time dude ranch was located in what would be the Bridger-Teton National Forest on the Green River at the William "Billy" Wells place. Built in 1897, it operated until 1908. The Triangle F Ranch and V-V Ranch in Bondurant are also examples of early dude ranches.

Throughout much of the twentieth century, ranchers continued to supplement their income, especially during lean financial years, by outfitting. These early outfitters were often small operators, who hired out only themselves with limited physical structures. In the 1920s, Matt O'Blak set up a hunting cabin below Pinon Ridge, including a guest cabin and a shop. O'Blak's operation ceased when he was shot and killed at his camp at Crow Creek in 1933.

Well-known and larger dude ranches in the Bridger-Teton National Forest include the Box R and the Z Bar U, both based near Cora. The Z Bar U was located on Willow Creek north of Cora on private land next to the forest. It was opened in 1935 by Jack Reynolds and sons Sid and Spencer (Spike). While constructing the place, an accident with a runaway team would take the life of Spike. The operation housed between fifteen and twenty guests, and its unique hospitality extended to people from all over the world as well as residents of Sublette County. The guest ranch remained in the Reynolds family ownership and operation until 1965 when it was sold to the Klaren family, who continued to operate it as a dude ranch. In 1968, John Welborn bought the place, but ceased using it as a dude ranch. It remains in the Welborn family, but for private use only.

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

The Box R Ranch is also located north of Cora on private land and is surrounded on three sides by the Bridger Teton National Forest. Ira Dodge moved to Willow Creek in the early 1890s where his four children were born to his wife, Sarah. During these years, Ira worked as a hunter, guide, rancher and writer. Among the people who came to the Dodge ranch to hunt, fish, and take pack trips were Theodore Roosevelt and the artist, Carl Rungius. Once in a while, when he had time, Ira would take a carload of elk to eastern zoos and parks. He filed on this homestead in 1898, but stayed only two years when he moved his family to the Daniel area. The ranch was sold to Irvin Lozier, who continued to operate the place as a dude ranch, later to be named the Box R, taking paying clients on big game hunting trips into the nearby Wind River Mountains. A lodge and cabins were constructed and used by guests during the warmer summer months and big game hunters in the fall. The Lozier family continued the operation throughout the twentieth century. The original historic lodge burned in 1989, and has been replaced with a modern log structure. The Box R closed its public operation in 2012.

Abner Luman sold the Osborn Ranch in 1931 to the Green River Lakes Lodge, a dude ranch operating on the west side of the river, managed by W. N. Hobson in partnership with Stanley Decker. Decker assumed complete ownership of the Lodge and incorporated the lodge into the Gannett Peak or G-P Bar Ranch. In 1966 the G-P Bar Ranch was sold back to the Government, and is now under the management of the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

According to Schoen, "During the 1930s, some of the big game outfitters constructed isolated log cabins at the spike camp locations away from the established dude ranches and hunting lodges or established their outfitting camps at cabin locations originally constructed by trappers or mining prospectors. Although tent camps were still used at these spike camp locations, the small log cabin was used as a kitchen for the outfitters during the hunting season and to store equipment during the off season. Although closely associated with the dude ranch or hunting lodge operation, these small outfitters cabins served a different function in the overall operation of the outfitting industry. They became the center of operations while at the spike camp location away from the main dude ranch or hunting lodge."

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office has documented that outfitting cabins represent a rare and distinct property type: a building historically used as a base camp by outfitters guiding visiting hunting parties. The business of providing professional guides to affluent hunting parties was a significant undertaking in the region. "The use of these cabins solely as a hunting camp distinguishes them from a separate property type significant in Wyoming history, that is, Dude Ranches." This latter point was made by P. Andres in his Determination of Eligibility Notification of the Gap Puche Cabin in 1989.

The Craig Cabin continues to be the center of the outfitting operation with spike camps located away from it. Again, this is a unique form of outfitting. Additionally, it was set up in this business after its original purpose, for housing trappers, was abandoned.

Conclusion

The most well-known and successful gold mining in Wyoming was at South Pass (South Pass City State Historic Site 48FR434), located approximately 90 air miles to the southwest of the Craig Cabin site. While the South Pass Gold Rush of 1868 is well documented, gold mining in the rest of the Bridger-Teton National Forest has been largely overlooked by modern scholars of Wyoming's history, underscoring the importance of the Craig Cabin. Promises of wealth from gold have teased prospectors and investors alike from the 1860s to the present. While little gold has been successfully extracted from the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the attempts have left its mark on the mountains, albeit small, yet significant. One such remnant is the Craig Cabin.

Very few trapper and gold miner cabins remain in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, or elsewhere in the West. Many of these original cabins were destroyed by the U.S. Forest Service. Of those remaining, almost all of the structures are in advance stages of deterioration, as reported in Merry Haydon's report on Historic Mining Context and Jamie Schoen's Evaluation of Historic Cabins associated with Outfitting Camps on the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

There also are few outfitting cabins still standing, and even fewer still in use. There are currently five cabins on the Bridger-Teton National Forest which are being used by outfitters. The Gap Puche Cabin, also known as the Wort's Hunting Camp (48TE1023) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. This cabin meets National Register Criterion A as a rare surviving building associated with the outfitting business for hunting, and Criterion B for its association with the locally important outfitter and businessman John Wort. At the time the cabin was evaluated for the National Register, it was the only known surviving example of its type or theme.

Craig Cabin
Name of Property

Sublette County, WY
County and State

The second cabin in the Bridger-Teton National Forest still in use by outfitters is the Craig Cabin, under consideration for the National Register with this nomination. The other three are Turner's Outfitting Cabin (BT-501) (48TE1434), Heart Six Cabin (BT-205) (48PA1192), and Dube/Mountain Creek Cabin (BT-258) (48PA1633). The Turner's Outfitting Cabin and Heart Six Cabin have been recommended to be considered eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and B. The Dube/Mountain Creek Cabin is considered not eligible for the National Register.

The Craig Cabin is very unusual in that it is still standing, in relatively good condition, and continues to be used today. It also represents three important Euro-American economic activities in the American West: fur trapping, gold mining, and outfitting. Its significance to history is considerable. Very few structures remain in Wyoming forests today that represent important early economic activities. Indeed, very few original structures from the late nineteenth century remain at all. Yet, the Craig Cabin does, and is worthy of the honor of the National Register of Historic Places listing.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

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Sublette County Historical Society, Museum of the Mountain Man, Pinedale, Wyoming.

Sublette County Library, Pinedale, Wyoming.

Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)

____ previously listed in the National Register

____ previously determined eligible by the National Register

____ designated a National Historic Landmark

____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

____ Other State agency

____ Federal agency (BLM Pinedale Office, Bridger-Teton National

☒ Forest office of the USFS)

☒ Local government (Sublette County Courthouse)

____ University

☒ Other

Name of repository: Bill Webb, personal papers.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 48SU2133

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx.. 4.1 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Sublette County, WY
County and State

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

3 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

Craig Cabin

Name of Property

Sublette County, WY

County and State

County: Sublette

State: Wyoming

Photographer: Ann Noble

Date Photographed: October, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

East façade of Craig Cabin, photographer facing west.
1 of 13.

East façade and south elevation of Craig Cabin, photographer facing northwest.
2 of 13.

Southwest corner of Craig Cabin, photographer facing northeast.
3 of 13.

West elevation of Craig Cabin, photographer facing east.
4 of 13.

Northwest corner of Craig Cabin, photographer facing southeast.
5 of 13.

Southwest corner of tack shed, photographer facing northeast.
6 of 13.

Southeast corner of tack shed, photographer facing northwest.
7 of 13.

North elevation of tack shed, photographer facing south.
8 of 13.

Head gate of diversion ditch.
9 of 13.

Diversion ditch, photographer facing northwest.
10 of 13.

Diversion ditch.
11 of 13.

Sluice box, photographer facing north.
12 of 13.

Water running off sluice box, photographer facing west.
13 of 13.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Bridger-Teton National Forest

street & number 360 North Cache

telephone 307-739-5510

city or town Jackson

state WY

zip code 83001

Craig Cabin

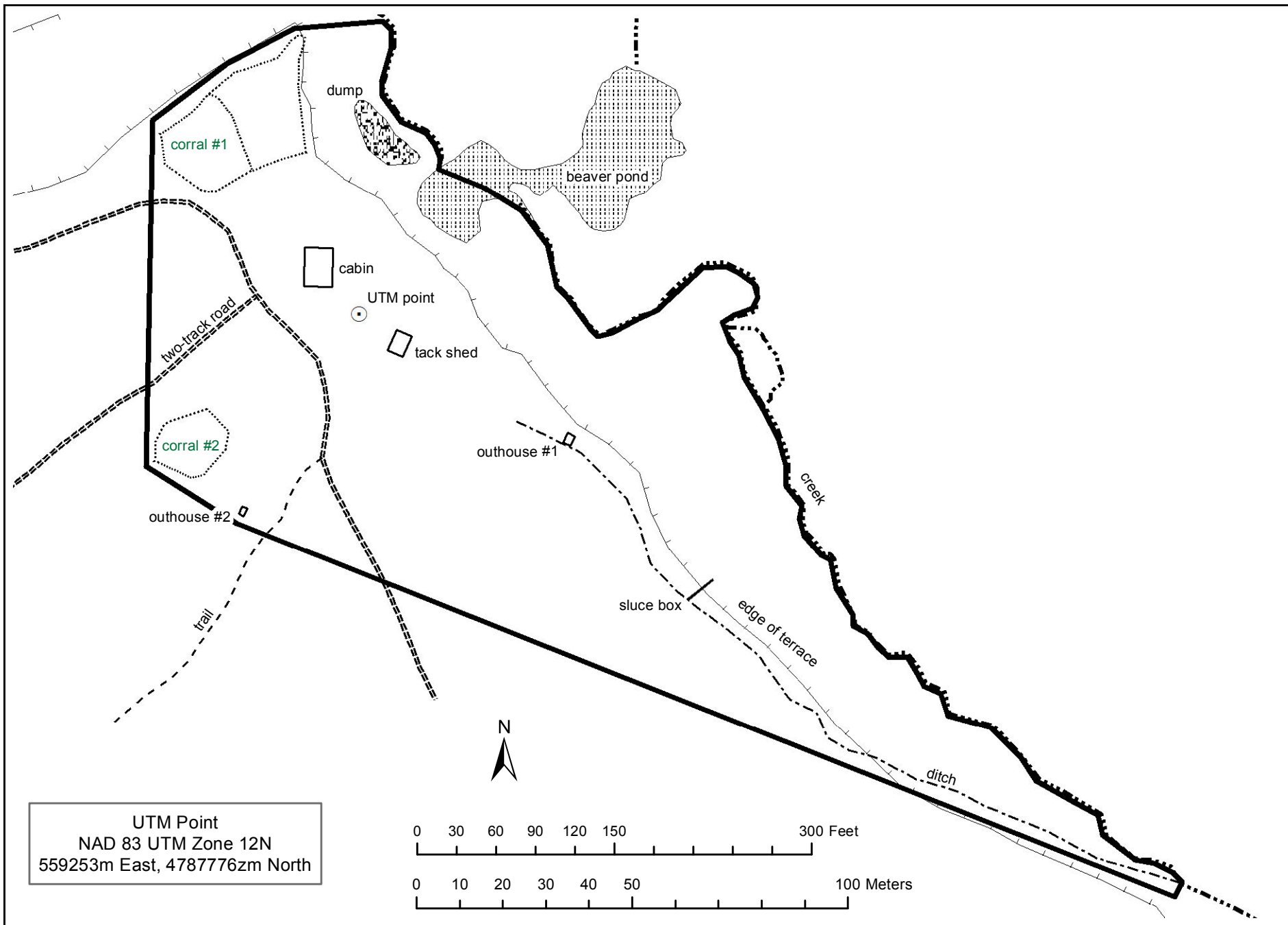
Name of Property

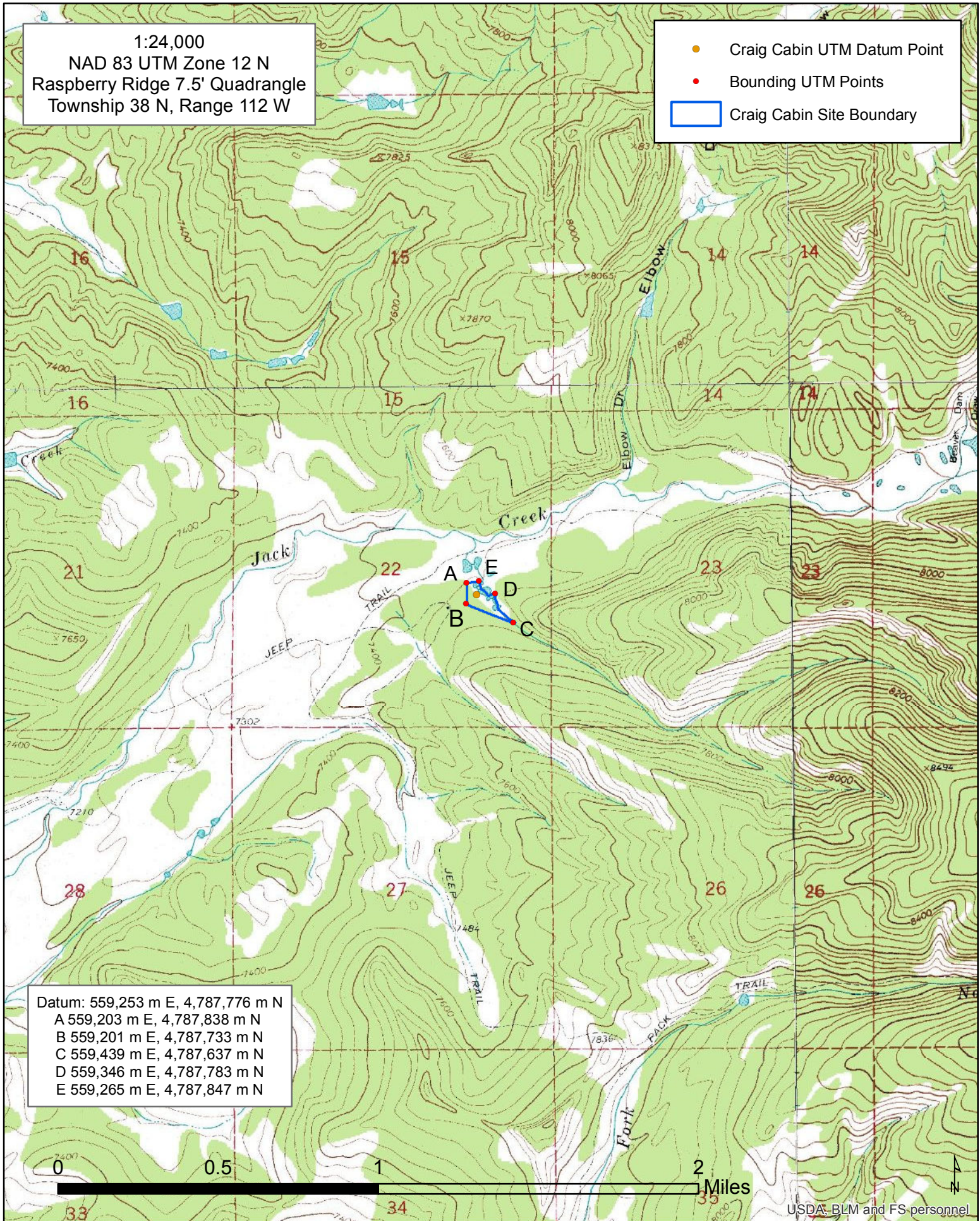
Sublette County, WY

County and State

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Location of the Craig Cabin, 48SU2133, Sublette County, WY.