

Aspen Grove Mining Camp

SITE #120201

GC1TQ48

Written & Researched by Angela Wynton

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Aspen Grove, V1K 1B8

Location: N 49°48.821'

W 120°32.739'

Parking: N 49°48.866'

W 120°32.756'

Geocache Location: N 49°48.862'

W 120°32.749'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0676551;

North 5520881 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,020 m./3,347 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1

Terrain difficulty: 1.5

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1900

Ownership: BC Forestry Rec Site

Access:

- Gravel Road
- Seasonal
- Vehicle accessible
- *Detailed access information on next page.*

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0
Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com or
www.GeoTourismCanada.com

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At the dusk of the Gold Rush many mining ventures grew in the Nicola Valley, including iron, gypsum, coal, gold and copper. It was the copper ventures that excited many, and from the early 1900s the rolling park-like prairie-land of Aspen Grove Camp was the heart of a very active mining district.

The prolific copper of the Aspen Grove area lies along the Allison Fault, suggesting an extension of the ore of Copper Mountain, southwest of Princeton. Years later, the well known geologist Dr. H.M.A. Rice would write, "It is surely more than a coincidence that deposits whose mineral constituents should be so like those of Copper Mountain should occur dotted along a line of faulting extending north from Copper Mountain."

The Aspen Grove deposit is an ideal copper formation, similar to the copper deposits of Michigan and Lake Superior. The copper minerals are disseminated through volcanic rocks of the Nicola Group and are Upper

Triassic volcanic and sedimentary rock. A large amount of the copper is in its native state with some *chalcocite*, a heavy dark grey mineral that is basically cuprous sulphite. It is an important ore of copper and is also referred to as copper glance.

The New Empire, in its September 1911 edition, published several comments, "Some of the better known mining engineers who have studied conditions say that the Aspen Grove copper camp is one of the largest and wealthiest in the west and the results that have been accomplished by the men who have exploited the district fully confirm this theory."

"The outside world little knows what transpires in some of these more remote camps, remote not so much in actual mileage as in the difficulty with which they are reached, but it is a matter of actual record that nearly one million dollars has already been spent in developing some of the copper properties of the Aspen Grove district. There are close onto six hundred claims in all..."



Aspen Grove c 1960

Between 1900 and the 1930s hundreds of claims were staked, many with interesting names such as Big Sioux, Tom Cat, Queen of Hearts, Parrot, Pearl, Snowflake and Blue Bell. Some are still referred to today.

The mining activities of Aspen Grove Camp and the surrounding area, Missezula, Pothole, Kentucky and Alleyne Lake regions continued for many years. Frank Bailey, a mining engineer, wrote in his booklet in the second decade of the 1900s, *“The trip from Merritt through Aspen Grove...is one of the most beautiful trips to be taken in an automobile in the summertime...You soon start to climb the Hamilton Hill to the east. This section has been for years known as the Commonage, where numbers of cattle range, sometimes the year round. From the top of the hill the road leads over an excellent rolling farming district to Crowders ranch, which is the present stopping place in*

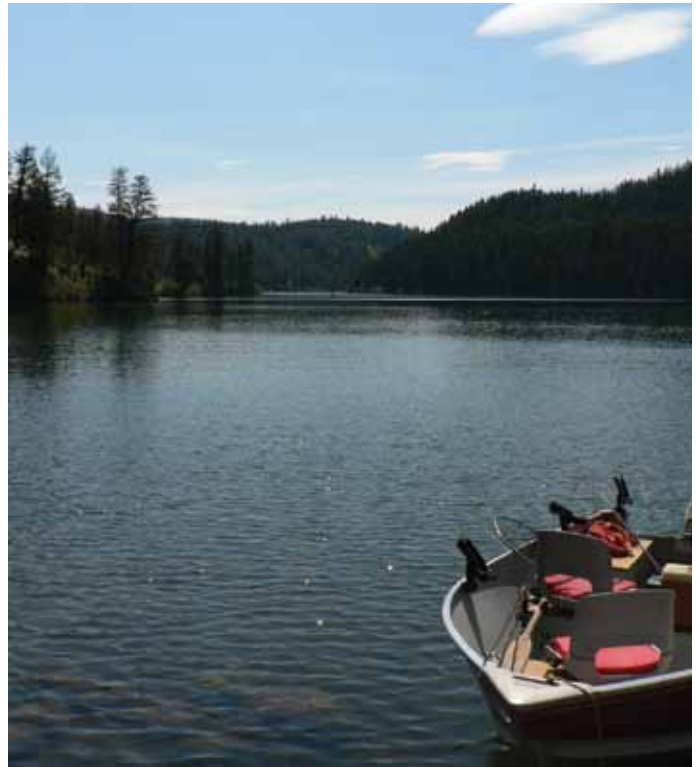
Detailed access information:

- From Merritt, follow Hwy #5A south to Aspen Grove.
- Continue through Aspen Grove 17 km south.
- Take Dillard Creek Forest Service Rd. to Missezula Lake Rd.
- Follow to Missezula Lake Rec Site.
- Please use caution and be prepared for back country driving.

Aspen Grove. It is here that the horse stages stop for noon, and where the passengers can see many of the Aspen Grove copper specimens.”

Unfortunately, the exploration and activity of the Aspen Grove Camp from 1900 to 1930 had rather disappointing results. It would be the 1950s before the copper was extracted more economically and less laboriously. While a great deal of tonnage was removed since that time, there still remains plenty of copper and minerals in the surrounding area. A number of claims are again current and with current technology it is expected more copper will be extracted in the future.

The once bustling Aspen Grove Camp, a geological wonder, a grassland beauty, a historic mining centre and a major contributor to the wealth and development of Merritt and the Nicola Valley, is now a peaceful and quiet sleepy haven in Gold Country.



BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

(1911, September). *The New Empire*. Vernon, B.C.

Bailey, F. (c1913). Nicola Similkameen and Tulameen Valleys: The Richest section of British Columbia. In *The Library of the University of California, Los Angeles* Vancouver, BC: Ward, Elwood and Pound Printers.

Rice, H.M.A. (1947). *Geology and Mineral Deposits of the Princeton map-area, British Columbia*. Ottawa, ON: King's Printer.