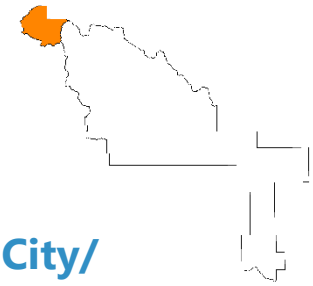
Mining at Sawtooth City: Photo Credit- The Community Library Center for Regional History



Sawtooth City/ Smiley Creek

Historical Highlights

For thousands of years the Northern Shoshone or *Mountain Sheepeaters* wintered at warm springs and summered in valleys of the Salmon River. Families lived under headman *Wongowutavi* until the Sheepeater War of 1879 forced them to reservations. Fur trader Alexander Ross explored Sawtooth Valley after "discovering" Galena Summit descending a trail along Horse Creek in 1824.

In 1878 Levi Smiley found gold, spurring mining and town site developments at Sawtooth City and Vienna. Miners carved into the bedrock and worked the land until one disaster after another led to the suspension of work. By the early 1900s the area had become a ghost town.

Sheep and cattle ranchers came after the miners left. Many filed for homesteads along Valley Road, the first settlement road in Sawtooth Valley. Wagon loads of supplies and mail were delivered to the Pierson Post Office/Old Obsidian. William Horton, the first Forest Service ranger in Sawtooth Valley, lived in a cabin he built at Pole Creek in 1909. Horton managed cattle and sheep allotments, fought forest fires, trapped bear and coyotes, installed telephone lines, planted trees, and built fences.

Vienna Mine Boarding House: Photo credit- The Community Library Center for Regional History

Historic Land Uses & Themes

Agriculture; Church group organizational camps; Civilian Conservation Corps projects; commerce; Forest Service administration; mining; outdoor recreation/tourism; resort development; timber; settlement; townsite development; infrastructure; and transportation.

National Register of Historic Places Properties and Districts

- 17 archaeological sites; 2 multi-component, 15 historic sites recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
- 21 historic sites recommended eligible for listing to the NRHP
- 1 archaeological/historic site listed on the NRHP; Sawtooth City (1975)
- 1 potential historic district; the Pettit Lake Recreational Residences includes 23 summer cabins or compounds on the Sawtooth National Forest; 14 properties are considered contributing to the potential historic district, 5 are individually eligible and 2 are possibly eligible for listing in the NRHP

Representative Sites

(Some of the sites that have been documented by the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office)

- The Valley Road (first settlement road in Sawtooth Valley)
- Vienna Townsite and Mining District
- Sawtooth City
- Pettit Lake Summer Homes
- Camp Perkins
- Pole Creek Guard Station
- Sawtooth Toll Road/Park Highway/Scenic Byway
- Law-Bradford Homestead

Cultural Resources

- 73 archaeological sites recorded on Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI) forms; 69 historic, 1 multi-component, and 3 prehistoric
- 53 historic sites recorded on Idaho SHPO Historic Sites Inventory (IHSI) forms

Horse Team Hauling Logs at the Sawtooth Mine: Photo credit - The Community Library Center for Regional History