

Excerpt from ~~Vol 2~~ Survey and Evaluation of the Iditarod Trail
and Connecting Trails in the Chugach National Forest
Vol 2: National Register Evaluation Forms. by K. Schweigert for U.S.F.S.
1991

Johnson
Pass
Military
Road

in places to have supported wagon traffic. Vegetation here is dense alders, tall grass, wild celery, Devil's club, and raspberries. Attempts to locate the road were fruitless, and it is possible that the roadway through this area has been destroyed by erosion or that it crossed Bench Creek near Point "I" and continued along the "pack trail" route shown on the quadrangle map to Point "K". However, evidence of such a crossing near Point "I" or of a road on the west side of Bench Creek in this area were not observed.

Northward from Point "J" the current trail again follows a wide roadbed with constructed grades and cuts, which is assumed to be the old wagon road. The wagon road and current recreational trail cross to the west side of Bench Creek at a relatively recent timber pedestrian bridge at Point "K". Remains of at least one earlier bridge were observed at the creek crossing.

The wagon road is very distinct between the Bench Creek bridge and Groundhog Creek, and for much of this distance the road is cut into the east-facing mountain slope. The current recreational trail follows the old road in this segment. The Seward C-6 Quadrangle map (1951/1980) indicates the "pack trail" along the eastern side of the Bench Creek drainage joins the current recreational trail and the old wagon road about 100 meters northeast of the Bench Creek bridge, but evidence of this intersection was not found.

The road is cut into rock cliffs at Groundhog Creek, and the crossing of that steep stream gorge is at a relatively recent timber pedestrian bridge. The road cuts here are dramatic despite the obvious erosion which has occurred since the wagon road was maintained.

Bureau of Land Management Iditarod Trail maps indicate that "Gleasons Camp 1910 Mining Camp" existed at a location from 100 to 200 meters northeast of the Groundhog Creek bridge. This area was examined closely, but definite remains of a mining camp were not found. The area between the road and the Bench Creek gorge is densely vegetated with grass, alder, and spruce. A depression about 15 meters in diameter and up to 2 meters deep was found about 200 meters from Groundhog Creek and immediately to the east of the road. An earthen berm on the south end of the depression and a possible drainage ditch to the north and northeast of the depression were observed, but no structural remains or artifacts were found.