

AN AUTHENTIC BLEND OF HISTORY AND ADVENTURE.

EXPERIENCE BAYHORSE.

For many years the site was not open to the public. In 2006, Bayhorse became a unit of Idaho's State Park system. The need to mitigate unsafe conditions left behind by historic mining practices provided the means to consolidate and cap tailings, creating parking lots and safe pathways.

Fencing and signing complete the corridors and make it clear where visitors can go to be close to historic areas and buildings and at the same time keep safe. Bayhorse provides a unique recreational opportunity to experience a fascinating part of Idaho's mining heritage. Refer to the *Bayhorse Safety Brochure* for additional information on mineral tailings and how to safely enjoy reclaimed mining sites.

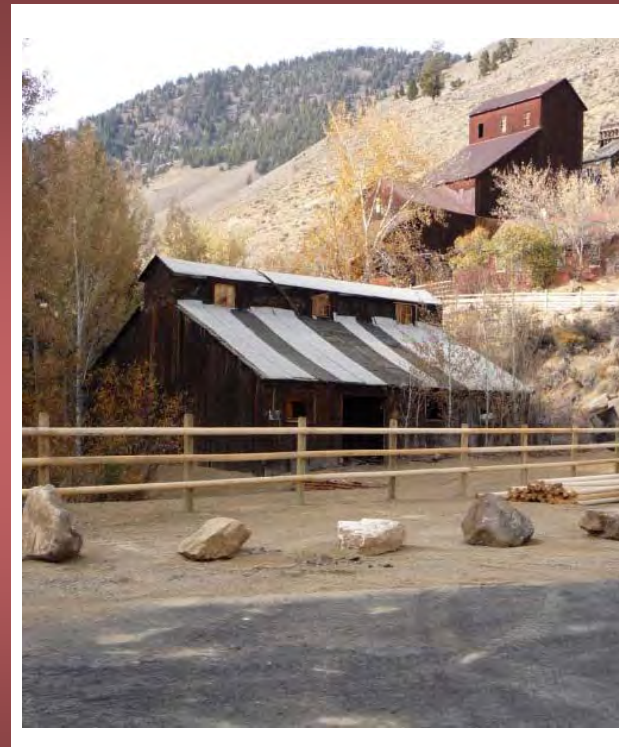
Please enjoy all the park has to offer, including the extended trail access beyond the actual town site that leads into Central Idaho's spectacular backcountry.

*Image by Idaho Artist, Ward Hooper
Posters are available for purchase at the Land of the Yankee Fork Interpretive Center.*

Land of the Yankee Fork State Park and Historic Area

The Land of the Yankee Fork State Park brings to life Idaho's frontier mining history. This state park is part of the larger Land of the Yankee Fork Historic Area located in scenic central Idaho.

Managed by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, the Salmon-Challis National Forest, and Bureau of Land Management, this historic area provides unique historical interpretation and numerous recreational opportunities. At the Interpretive Center in Challis there are museum exhibits, a gold panning station, audiovisual programs, and friendly personnel to provide information on local mining history and area attractions. Also of interest are the ghost towns of Bonanza and Custer, the Yankee Fork Gold Dredge, the Custer Motorway and the Challis Bison Jump.



LAND OF THE YANKEE FORK STATE PARK
AND HISTORIC AREA
CHALLIS, ID
(208) 879-5244

www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

BAYHORSE

THE HISTORY



THE BAYHORSE EXPERIENCE.

BAYHORSE: A TOUR THROUGH IDAHO'S RICH MINING PAST AND ACCESS TO SPECTACULAR BACKCOUNTRY

Bayhorse is a historic mining town located a few miles southwest of Challis, Idaho. The discovery of lode bearing ore in the area led to the development of mines in the area in the late 1870s but it wasn't until experiment and innovation in metallurgical science led to more efficient ore reduction processes that the mines of the Bayhorse District could produce profitably. The biggest years of production for Bayhorse were from about 1882 through the 1890s when a drop in the price of silver and lead eventually led to the shutdown of the mines. Mines were started up again sporadically in the 20th century as prices and processes improved; but the population of the town which grew up on Bayhorse Creek around the original smelter and mill was never again more than a few dozen,

certainly not the 300 to 500 reported during the heyday of the mines.

Bayhorse is nestled in a narrow, rocky canyon about three miles from where Bayhorse Creek enters the Salmon River. The terrain surrounding the town is rugged with steep slopes and deep canyons. Mining in this area was for the most determined prospector. Historically, the mountain passes to Bayhorse from the outlying areas were blocked by snow and winter travel was almost nonexistent. During the most productive years of the Bayhorse Mining District, ten million dollars worth of metals were extracted from the region. Today, only the mill and a few buildings and ruins remain at the site of a once thriving mining camp.

In 1864 prospectors met a man with two bay horses who told of a rich mining ground. Subsequent searches and inquiries of the man and his horses led to the name of Bay Horse for the creek, town and mining district. The rich silver and copper mines drew hundreds of people in search of wealth, and for a time, Bayhorse prospered.

It was not until 1872 that a lead-silver vein was discovered near Bayhorse Creek. Other discoveries led to the creation of the Bayhorse Mining District in 1877. Soon newspapers were touting the natural advantages of the area necessary to ensure a good mining camp. The single most important one being - good ore. The rush was on and a smelter, mill, and town of 300 sprang up.

The community of Bayhorse grew along with the mines. The success of the smelter drew more people and businesses to the town. Businesses included several saloons, meat markets, general stores and boarding houses. The majority of the buildings were constructed of wood with local stone foundations.

As the fame of the discoveries spread, people flocked to the new mining area. Mining engineers, miners, stone masons, loggers, merchants, mill men, businessmen, doctors, cooks and laundrymen filled the town. Women were scarce in the beginning and when a single woman moved to town, the men were very attentive and she didn't remain single very long. Eventually, devastating fires, dwindling reserves of high grade ore and falling silver prices doomed the town's existence.

By the turn of the century only a handful of miners remained. New mineral discoveries and attempts to mine fluorspar kept some hopeful throughout the twentieth century. In the end, nearly 100,000 tons of ore was pulled from the mountains, leaving more than 25,000 tons of tailings.