



# Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site

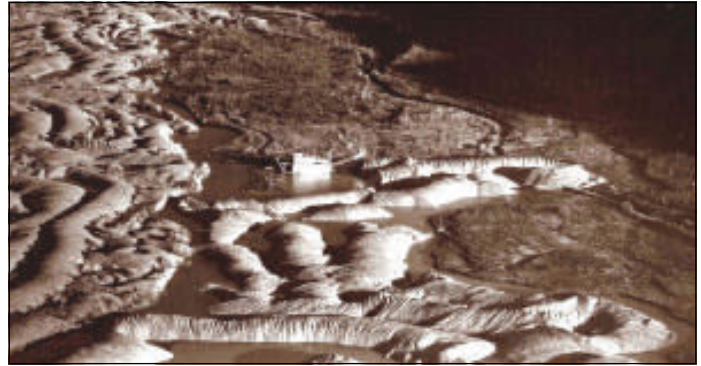
— Symbolizes the importance of dredging operations in the Yukon from 1899 to 1966

## Background

During the early years of the Klondike Gold Rush, more than 30,000 miners hand mined for gold on the rich placer creeks. Much of the gold was simply too difficult and expensive to remove using hand-mining techniques. While hand miners were working hard, promoters and investors were looking for long-term mining possibilities in the Yukon.

In September 1898, the first dredge began working the Yukon River. Promotion of the Klondike goldfields brought in two large companies, the Canadian Klondike Mining Company in 1905 and the Yukon Gold Company a few years later.

Large land holdings, called concessions, had to be available to the corporations. Through negotiations with the Federal Government, the first concession was granted in 1900 to Joe Boyle. The corporations constructed hydroelectric power stations to provide a reliable and consistent supply of power to run the dredges. They constructed a system of dams and ditches to provide an adequate supply of water for the dredges.



**Historic Photo of Dredge No 4. - Dawson City, Yukon**  
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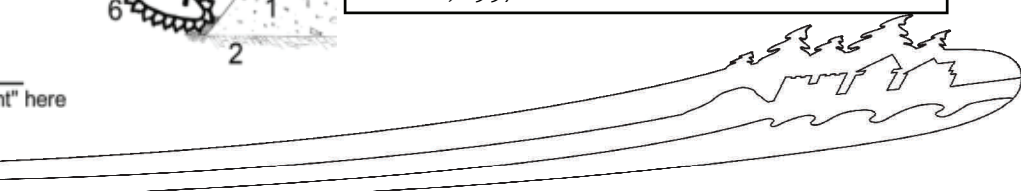
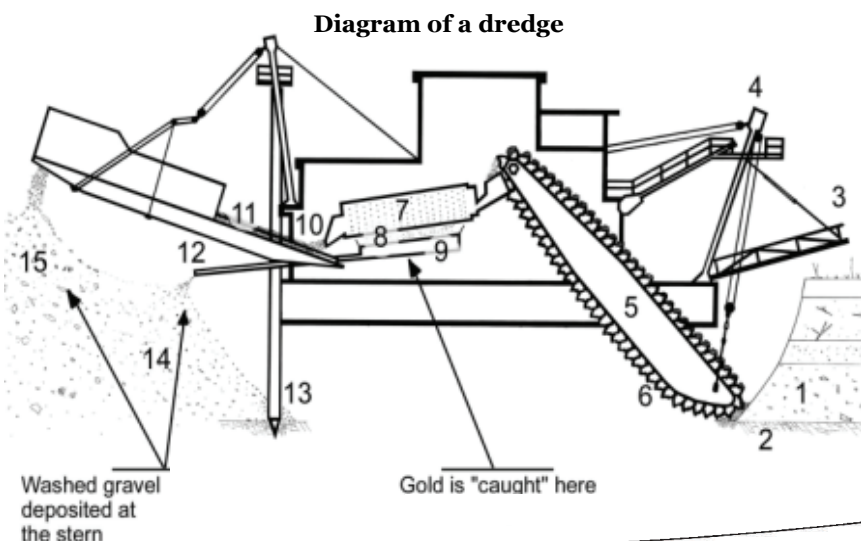
Dawson City was the key to the success of the efforts of the large corporations. It could provide government administration and banking services. The transportation network, of rail and steamship, that ended in Dawson City, ensured that the companies could receive the supplies of machinery that were needed to operate. Dawson City also provided a large labour force and suppliers and services to meet the corporate mining needs.

Dredge No. 4, built in 1912 for the Canadian Klondike Mining Company, was the largest wooden hulled bucket-line dredge in North America. It worked in the Klondike Valley on the "Boyle Concession" until 1940 and then was relocated to Bonanza Creek and worked this valley until 1959.

## Reasons for National Historic Importance

Dredge No. 4 is commemorated because it represents the importance of dredging operations in the Yukon between 1899 and 1966. Dredges were brought to the Yukon in 1899 as a very efficient means of mining for Klondike gold. Corporate mining played a major role in the viability of the community of Dawson City and the Yukon Territory.

*Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1997*



At the peak of corporate mining, a dozen dredges churned through the creeks. Dredging continued in the Klondike until 1966, when the last of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Company's dredges shut down. Dredge No. 4 represents the many decades of corporate mining in the Canadian mid-north through the 20th century.

## Milestones

### 1898

The first dredge began operating in the Yukon.

### 1899

Promoters negotiated with the Canadian government for large tracts of land.

### 1900

Joe Boyle, from Woodstock Ontario, was granted 40 square miles of land.

### 1905

Canadian Klondike Mining Company (CKM Co.), managed by Joe Boyle, built their first dredge.

### 1906-1925

The Yukon Gold Corporation operated nine dredges.

### 1909

Yukon Gold Corp. built the Twelve Mile ditch to provide water for hydraulic mining.

### 1911

North Fork Hydro Power Plant was in operation and supplying electricity to run all the dredges.

### 1912

CKM Co. Dredge No. 4 was built.

### 1921

CKM Co. went bankrupt.

### 1923

The Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (YCGC) was formed and they operated alone until 1966.

### 1940

Dredge No. 4 was relocated to Bonanza Creek.

### 1959

Trapped by increasing labour costs, shrinking gravel reserves and the fixed price of gold, YCGC shut down Dredge No. 4 .

### 1966

The last of the four operating dredges are shut down, ending YCGC's mining operations in the Klondike.

### 1970

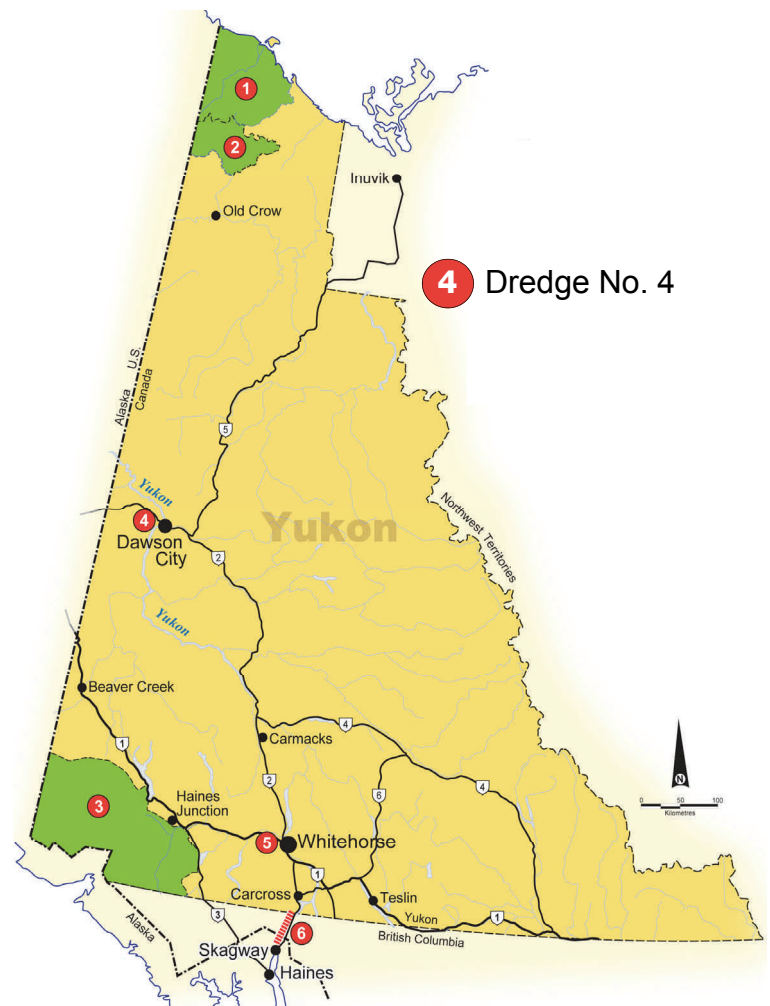
Parks Canada acquired Dredge No. 4.

### 1997

Dredge No. 4 became a national historic site.

## Location

Dredge No. 4 is located 12.3 km from the Klondike Highway on Bonanza Creek Road (near Dawson City).



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