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# TRONOH DREDGE HOLES: TURNING SCARS

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## Location

DREDGE HOLE LANE HARRIETVILLE, ALPINE SHIRE

## Municipality

ALPINE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8324-0030

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 18, 2005

The Tronoh bucket dredge was the biggest in the southern hemisphere: it measured 167 metres long, weighed 4,813 tonnes, and could dredge to a depth of approximately 41 metres. The dredge was built by Thompsons of Castlemaine, and an electricity line to power the plant was installed from Bright. Construction costs totalled £380,000. The Tronoh dredge commenced operations in 1942 and ceased work in 1954. The Tronoh leases extended southwards for a distance of 7 km from a point halfway between Stoney and Smoko creeks. The total gold production of the Tronoh dredge at Harrietville was 54,000 oz. (The highest producing dredge in the State was the Victoria Gold Dredging Co NL Strangway's dredge, which produced 115,941 ounces of gold between 1938 to 1948.) In 1955, the Tronoh dredge was sold and shipped to Malaya.

The Tronoh Gold Dredging Pond is of historical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria.

The Tronoh Gold Dredging Pond is historically and scientifically as a characteristic example of an important form of gold mining. Gold mining sites are of crucial importance for the pivotal role they have played since 1851 in the development of Victoria. As well as being a significant producer of Victoria's nineteenth century wealth, gold mining, with its intensive use of machinery played an important role in the development of the State's

manufacturing industry. The Tronoh Gold Dredging Pond is a striking visual monument to the largest bucket dredge built in Australia with the southern-most pond reflecting the vessel's enormous dimensions.

[Source: Victorian Heritage Register]

Hermes Number 11023

Property Number

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## History

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

In 1938, the London-based Tronoh Finance Co. (already with dredging interests in Malaya) leased river flats totalling 356 hectares on the Upper Ovens. The Tronoh leases extended southwards for a distance of 7 km from a point halfway between Stoney and Smoko creeks. The bucket dredge was the biggest in the southern hemisphere: it measured 167 metres long, weighed 4,813 tonnes, and could dredge to a depth of approximately 41 metres. The dredge was built by Thompsons of Castlemaine, and an electricity line was installed from Bright. Construction costs totalled £380,000.

The Tronoh dredge commenced operations in 1942. Soon after, however, wartime manpower restrictions forced its closure for the duration of the WW2, and it was 1946 before operations commenced in earnest. The dredge turned to face north in 1949, the same year in which it returned its highest average yield of 2.29 grains per cubic yard. In fact, the annual volumes of material excavated by the dredge did not exceed much more than half the projected target. Added to that, continuing low yields and high labour costs eventually made operations unprofitable and the dredge ceased work in 1954. The total gold production of the Tronoh dredge at Harrietville was 54,000 oz. The company failed to honour the land rehabilitation and reclamation covenants on its leases. In 1955, the Tronoh dredge was sold and shipped to Malaya.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*