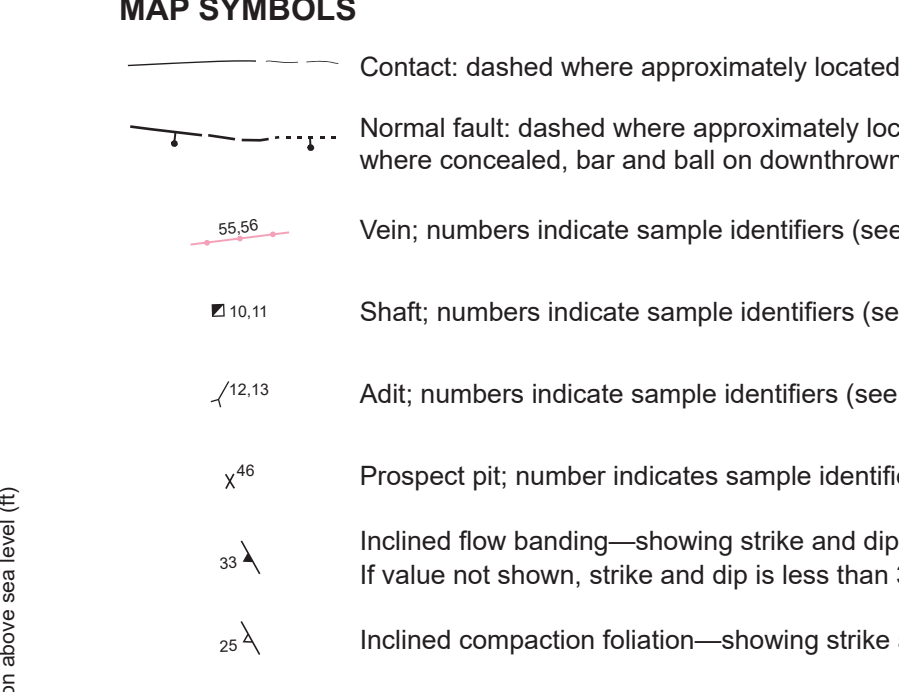
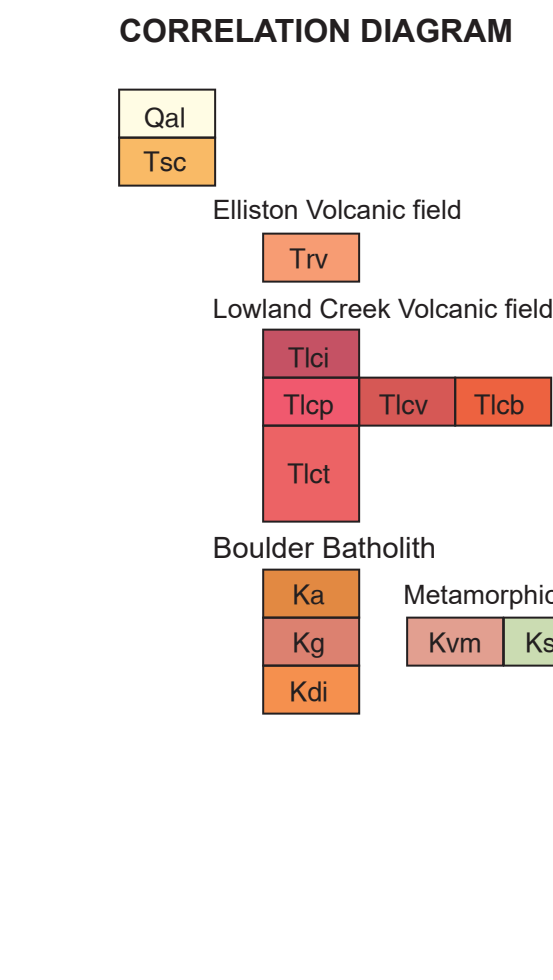


Figure 1. Location map. Geology after Vuke and others (2007).



Base map produced by the United States Geological Survey  
**Orofino Mountain** 1:24,000-scale quadrangle map  
Control by USGS, NOD/NOAA, and USFWS  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1954–1956  
Field checked: 1987 Map edited: 1989  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
Grid: 1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator Zone 12  
UTM grid declination: 1°15' West  
1988 Magnetic North Declination: 16°30' East  
Vertical Datum: National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929  
Horizontal Datum: 1927 North American Datum

Location of Oro Fino Mining District map

**Lockhart Meadows** 1:24,000-scale quadrangle map  
Control by USGS, NOD/NOAA  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1954–1956  
Field checked: 1987 Map edited: 1989  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
Grid: 1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator Zone 12  
UTM grid declination: 1°10' West  
1988 Magnetic North Declination: 16°30' East  
Vertical Datum: National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929  
Horizontal Datum: 1927 North American Datum

Shaded relief created from 10 meter digital elevation model from U.S. Geological Survey National Elevation Dataset.

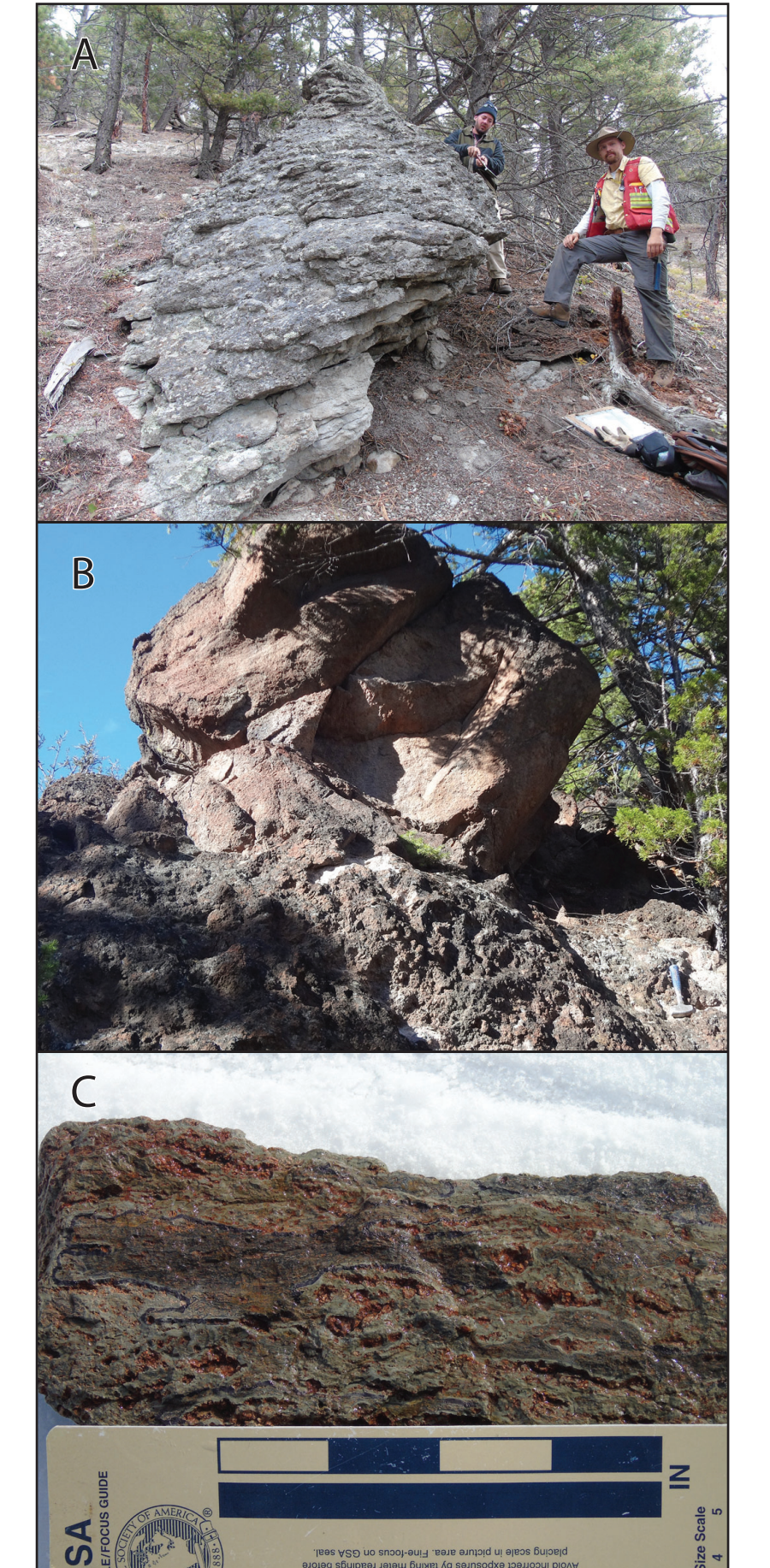
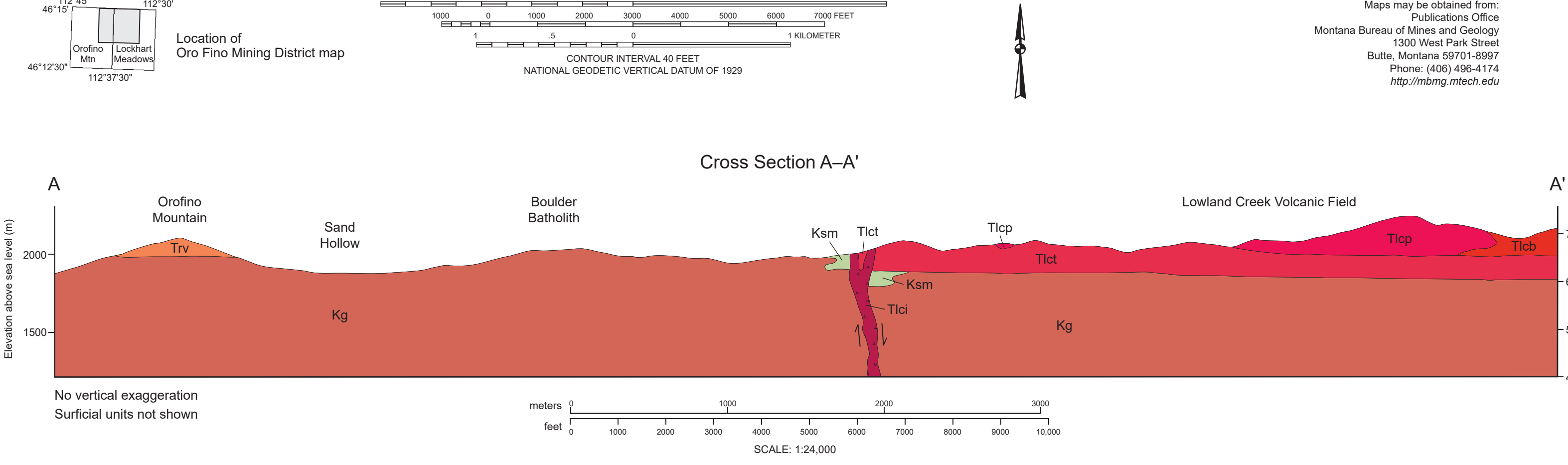


Figure 2. Rock photographs. (A) Non-welded Eocene rhyolite tuff (unit Tlc). (B) Rhyolodacite porphyry lava breccia (unit Tcb). (C) Fiamme in moderately welded Tertiary rhyolite ignimbrite (unit Tiv).

**INTRODUCTION**

Veins in the Oro Fino mining district host precious metal (Ag > Au) ore deposits that formed during Eocene caldera-cycle magmatism in the Lowland Creek volcanic field. Eocene volcanic activity marked the conclusion of regional basement-core, Laramide-style deformation (Houston and Dilles, 2013). The Oro Fino district follows a northeast trend of mines that contain Eocene epithermal mineralization within the Late Cretaceous Boulder Batholith (e.g., Foster, 1987; Metesh and Scarberry, 2016). The Tuveo mine sits on an estimated 6 million tons of Au- and Ag-bearing breccia that forms a 2-mi-long northeast-trending ridge. Ore minerals include ruby silver (proustite and pyargite) and argentic, which occur in onion-skin textured chaledony bands. The Flame Gulch mine contains Au and Ag ores in altered and brecciated rhyolite intrusions (Hargrave, 1990). The Flame Gulch mine is located about 7 mi northeast of the Tuveo mine and shares a similar geologic setting. Like the Tuveo mine, gold-silver mineralization at the Flame Gulch mine is due to rhyolite intrusion and hydrothermal circulation in a caldera wall setting. Gold and silver ores occur in altered and brecciated rhyolite intrusions that form a semi-circular 0.5-mi wide ridge that extends northeastward for about 3 mi. For a detailed summary of alteration assemblages, prospecting, and historical mine activities in Flame Gulch, see Hargrave (1990). Au-Ag mineralization at the Montana Tunnels mine is hosted in a feeder structure for an eroded maar volcano that formed at around 51.9 Ma (Olson and others, 2017). Au occurs in electrum, pyrite, and sphalerite, whereas silver is found principally in galena (Sillicoe and others, 1985).

Plutonic rocks, including the Boulder Batholith (fig. 1), formed throughout southwestern Montana during Mesozoic contraction and Cordilleran arc magmatism (Tilling and others, 1968; Hamilton, 1988; Rutland and others, 1989; Saleeby and others, 1992; Lagesson and others, 2001; Gaschnig and others, 2011). The Boulder Batholith extends from Butte to Helena and consists of about 15 plutons exposed over 4,500 km<sup>2</sup>. The roof of the batholith crystallized beneath a cover of volcanic rocks of similar age and composition. The Elkhorn Mountains volcanic field (e.g., Klepper and others, 1957) erupted over a period of about 10 Ma (Tilling and others, 1968; Olson and others, 2017). The batholith is more or less zoned in terms of age and composition (Tilling and others, 1968; Klepper and others, 1971; du Bray and others, 2012). Granodiorite to gabbro plutons along the north, east, and southern margins of the batholith crystallized between about 81 and 76 Ma while the principal body of the Butte pluton, formed between about 75 and 74 Ma (Lund and others, 2002; Berger and others, 2011). The Boulder Batholith hosts a world-class ore deposit at Butte (Houston and Dilles, 2013; Czuchra, 2006).

Magmatism resumed in western Montana during the Cenozoic and persisted until about 30 Ma (Mosoll, 2015). The Lowland Creek volcanic field (Smedes, 1962; Smedes and Thomas, 1965) (fig. 1) formed at around 53 to 48 Ma (Dudas and others, 2010), and during the earliest phase of Cenozoic volcanism in Montana. The volcanic field consists of intracaldera deposits including collapsed tuff blocks (fig. 2A), fumaroles and rhyolodacite porphyry lavas (fig. 2B) (Scarberry, 2017; Olson and others, 2017) that are similar to those of the 38 to 18 Ma U.S. Great Basin ignimbrite provinces (Axen and others, 1993; Best and others, 2013). Cenozoic volcanic deposits in Montana are generally older and smaller in volume compared with those in the Great Basin.

**Previous Mapping**

The geologic map presented here draws on work from several existing studies. Williams (1951) produced a geologic map of an area east of Warm Springs, Montana that included the Oro Fino mining district. Smedes (1968), and Hargrave and Berg (2013) mapped in the region at 1:48,000 and 1:24,000 scale, respectively, with a focus on the geology of the Lowland Creek volcanic field. Berg and Hargrave (2004) mapped the Deer Lodge Valley at 1:48,000 scale, and Elliott and McDonald (2009) mapped and assessed geologic hazards in Silver Bow County at 1:48,000 scale.

**UNIT DESCRIPTIONS**

- Sediments**
  - Oal** **Alluvium and colluvium (Holocene–Pleistocene)**—Well-sorted gravel, silt, and clay along modern streams and floodplains. Includes fine deposits adjacent to stream channels, talus slope debris, colluvium, and landslides. Thickness is variable but less than 10 m.
  - Tsc** **Sixmile Creek Formation, undivided (Tertiary—Middle and Late Miocene)**—Likely the Anderson Ranch member of the Sixmile Creek Formation that is differentiated along the eastern edge of the Deer Lodge Valley (Sears and others, 2009). Poorly lithified, tan to light gray, moderately to poorly sorted silt to coarse sand. The composition of sand grains is analogous to that of bedrock exposed east of the Deer Lodge Valley, suggesting a local clast source. Contains 5- to 60-cm-thick beds of matrix-supported, very coarse sand to pebble conglomerate with silty to sandy matrix, interpreted to be debris flow facies. Includes 1.0- to 3-m-thick beds of clast-supported pebble to cobble conglomerate, with subrounded to rounded clasts of predominantly local affinity. These beds are interpreted to be small to medium channels. Commonly includes 10- to 30-cm-thick massive light gray ashly silt to fine sand beds. Thickness is estimated to be up to 3 km in the Deer Lodge Valley based on drillhole data (Berg and Hargrave, 2004).
- Cenozoic Volcanic Rocks**
  - Elliston volcanic field**

Mosoll (2015) described a >1-km sequence of lavas and fragmental volcanic rocks west of Helena and assigned the vent-proximal deposits to three volcanic fields: Avon, Garnet Range, and Crater Mountain. These volcanic fields post-date the Eocene Lowland Creek volcanic field and are collectively referred to here as the Elliston volcanic field. The Elliston volcanic field consists of a 48 Ma to 46 Ma lower series dominated by intermediate composition lavas, and a 41 Ma to 39 Ma upper series dominated by rhyolite tuff. The ignimbrite is not dated, but based on textural and mineralogical similarities it may correlate with 39 Ma rhyolite ash-flow tuffs described by Mosoll (2015) in the Elliston volcanic field.
  - Trv** **Rhyolite, undifferentiated (Eocene—Middle Oligocene)**—Smedes (1968) mapped rhyolite flows, flow breccia, vitrophyre lava, dikes, bedded breccia, and tuff in the vicinity of the Oro Fino mining district. Volcanic deposits described as porphyritic flow-banded rhyolite lavas, breccia, and vitrophyre by Hargrave and Berg (2013) are included in the unit. In the northwestern map corner, on top of Oro Fino Mountain, the unit consists of moderately welded rhyolite ignimbrite that contains fiamme, or compacted pumice, that are 10 cm (4 in) long (fig. 2C). Fresh surfaces of the ignimbrite are characterized by alternating pink and gray bands. The ignimbrite is crystal-poor, with about 5 percent phenocrysts consisting of euhedral black quartz, subhedral sanidine, and some embayed quartz megacrysts. The ignimbrite is not dated, but based on textural and mineralogical similarities it may correlate with 39 Ma rhyolite ash-flow tuffs described by Mosoll (2015) in the Elliston volcanic field.
- Lowland Creek volcanic field**
  - Tic** **The 53–49 Ma Lowland Creek volcanic field** (fig. 1; Smedes, 1962; Dudas and others, 2010) contains suites of andesite-rhyolite that formed during two main eruptive cycles (Foster, 1987). The volcanic pile is about 915 m (3,000 ft) thick between Butte and Anaconda and consists of rhyolite outflow tuff and near vent and intracaldera deposits of andesite-rhyolite tuff, lavas, breccia, intrusions, and lava domes. Epithermal Au-Ag mineralization formed after caldera collapse (Foster, 1987) and occurs throughout the volcanic field (fig. 1). Au-bearing diatreme and fumarole deposits at Montana Tunnels and the Ruby Mine, respectively, are intracaldera vents (Sillicoe and others, 1985; Foster, 1987) and Au-Ag mineralization at the Tuveo and Flame Gulch Mines formed via fluid circulation along a reurgent caldera vent wall. For additional details related to the ore setting and production at these mines, see Metesh and Scarberry (2016).

- Dike rocks (Eocene)**—Smedes (1968) described porphyritic dike rocks associated with lava flows (unit Tlc), and lamprophyre dikes that cut all units in the volcanic field. Includes subvolcanic dikes described by Hargrave and Berg (2013) that exhibit subvertical compaction foliation and contains plagioclase, biotite, and quartz phenocrysts. The unit is silicified and brecciated along the SE margin of the Butte Granite (Kq) where the dike rocks may follow a caldera ring fracture (see cross section). A northeast-trending rhyolite dike is continuous for nearly a kilometer north of Ramsey, located about 20 km (12 mi) south of the Oro Fino mining district. This rhyolite dike crystallized at around 51.08 Ma and contains inherited Cretaceous–Archean zircon grains (Scarberry, 2019).
- Tkp** **Rhyolodacite porphyry lavas (Eocene)**—Dark gray to gray and maroon, coarsely porphyritic, rhyolodacite (Derkey and Bartholomew, 1988; Dudas and others, 2010; Scarberry and Elliott, 2016). The lavas are platy, crystal-poor (10–15 percent), and display near-planar flow banding towards the base of individual flows, and in contrast the lavas are crystal-rich porphyry with highly convoluted flow bands towards the tops of individual flows. The primary phenocrysts include plagioclase crystals that are commonly 5 mm or longer, biotite, hornblende, and quartz in a devitrified and oxidized groundmass. Smedes (1968) mapped older and younger sets of lavas that differ mainly in their degree of porphyritic alteration, whereby the alteration is widespread in the older lavas and not the younger lavas. Hargrave and Berg (2013) described nine different lava flow sequences northwestern of Butte, <sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar ages of 51.79 ± 0.51 Ma (Scarberry and Elliott, 2016) and 51.79 ± 0.07 Ma (Dudas and others, 2010) are reported for the unit. 52.87 ± 0.26 Ma clasts of rhyolodacite are observed in rhyolite tuff (Tiv) near Anaconda (<sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar, Dudas and others, 2010). The sequence is up to 350 m thick locally.
- Tlc** **Rhyolodacite vitrophyre (Eocene)**—Black and viric lava that contains abundant plagioclase phenocrysts and occasional biotite. The unit is exposed at, or near, the base and margins of the porphyry volcano (Tlp) and is a facies of the same volcanic pulse. The vitrophyre is over 100 m thick where it is brecciated and banked into rhyolite ignimbrite (Tiv) west of Butte.
- Tkb** **Breccia (Eocene)**—Predominantly autoclasic flow breccia that formed during emplacement of rhyolodacite porphyry lavas (Tlp) and vitrophyre (Tlv). Autoclasic flow breccia is monolithologic, matrix- and clast-supported and variably indurated. Autoclasic flow breccia occurs at both the top and base of the porphyry lavas (Tlp) and vitrophyre (Tlv). Breccia in vitrophyre is dark, glassy, and monolithologic. Rapid cooling at the outer margins of the porphyry lavas (Tlp) formed vitrophyre (Tlv), which turned to breccia in locations where the flow continued to spread. Excellent outcrops of the basal breccia occur in the Opportunity 7.5° quadrangle (Scarberry and Elliott, 2016), where it is recognized by white to salmon pink, poorly indurated and matrix-supported block and ash deposits that transition up section to massive, clast-supported, autoclasic breccia. Autoclasic breccia associated with the top of rhyolodacite lavas (Tlp) is recognized by flow-banded blocks of rhyolodacite in a lava matrix (fig. 2B).
- Ttd** **Rhyolite tuff (Eocene)**—White and gray, lithic- and crystal-rich variably welded tuff. Three distinct horizons are recognized that are gradational to one another. West of Butte the bottom 80 m consists of non-welded, pumice- and lithic- and biotite-rich dacite-rhyolite tuff that ranges in age from 53.36 ± 0.13 to 52.64 ± 0.39 Ma (<sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar, Derkey and Bartholomew, 1988; Dudas and others, 2010; Scarberry and Elliott, 2016). The base of the section locally contains silicified pebble-sand conglomerate that is cut by chaledony veins that transition up section to non-welded lithic-rich tuff. The overlying 150 m of the section is non-welded, bedded air-fall and base surge deposits (fig. 2A) that contain sparse, thin, laminar and densely welded tuff interbeds. The uppermost 70 m of the section consists of moderately welded rhyolite tuff with a <sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar age of 52.50 ± 0.32 (Scarberry and Elliott, 2016). Moderately welded tuff has a compaction foliation defined by compressed pumice. Gas escape vents that formed during vapor-phase crystallization are also flattened. In total, the sequence is over 300 m thick in the quadrangle. The unit may contain two rhyolite tuff sequences, one that erupted at around 52.9 Ma and the other at around 51.8 Ma (Dudas and others, 2010; Olson and others, 2017). The two rhyolite tuff sequences are difficult to distinguish mineralogically or geochemically (Dudas and others, 2010).

- Boulder Batholith and Elkhorn Mountains volcanic field**
  - Ka** **Aplite (Late Cretaceous)**—Light tan, sheet-like outcrops that appear bedded in places but lack volcanic or sedimentary structures. The rock is typically fine-grained with a sugary and equigranular texture although moderately coarse varieties occur. Minerals include 10 percent biotite and near equal amounts of quartz and feldspar. Includes small masses of pegmatitic rocks that contain radiating tourmaline crystals, potassium feldspar, and plagioclase. Aplite on the west side of the Boulder Batholith, north of Butte, is 74.8 ± 0.6 Ma (LA-ICPMS, U-Pb on zircon) (Korzeb and Scarberry, 2018).
  - Kg** **Butte Granite (Late Cretaceous)**—Massive jointed granite outcrops that form the principal pluton, by volume, of the Boulder Batholith. Coarse, medium, and fine varieties occur and exhibit non-zoned plagioclase (45–50%), orthoclase (20–30%), and quartz (5–10%), (Berg and Hargrave, 2004). Contains average amounts of sphen, apatite, magnetite, and rare zircon (Weeks, 1974). The Butte Granite has an age of 76.28 ± 0.12 Ma (Martin and others, 1999).
  - Kdi** **Diorite intrusions (Late Cretaceous)**—Isolated brecciated bodies that cross cut contacts locally in the northern part of the Sugarloaf Mountain 7.5° quadrangle (Derkey and others, 1993). Intrusions form a series of aligned rock towers mantled by lava flow breccia near Sugarloaf Mountain (Scarberry, 2016). In part, they represent intrusive equivalents to the basalt-andesite lava sequence (Kema) and most, if not all, of the intrusions pre-date rocks of the Boulder Batholith (Kg). A diorite intrusion in the Emery mining district, located about 16 km northwest of the Oro Fino mining district, has a U-Pb weighted mean age of about 80 Ma (Korzeb and Scarberry, 2018).
- Metamorphic rocks**
  - Kvm** **Metamorphosed volcanic rocks (Late Cretaceous)**—Thermally metamorphosed andesite and basalt fragmental rocks and related dike rocks and rhyolite welded tuff (Smedes, 1959). Remnants of the lower and middle members of the Elkhorn Mountains volcanic field (Klepper and others, 1957), and the roof and walls of the Boulder Batholith.
  - Ksm** **Metamorphosed sedimentary rocks (Late Cretaceous)**—Roof pendants of the Butte Granite. Blackleaf and Kootenai Formations are the suggested protoliths (Elliott and McDonald, 2009) for these rocks that are metamorphosed to hornfels, quartzite and marble.

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