

HISTORY OF MINING IN THE SOUTH PARK AREA AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MINING

KEY

Terminology

Define the following terms as they relate to mining

Brassing in/out – Each miner would have a brass tag with their number; at the beginning of each work shift the miner would take his tag from the outside of the board and move it to the inside of the board. This board was located just at the entrance of the mine (portal). If there was ever an accident in the mine, one could look at the board and find out who was in the mine.

Change house – The mine building where workers change into work clothes; also known as the "dry".

Grubstake – Finances or supplies of food and other materials furnished to a prospector in return for an interest in any discoveries made.

High-grader – One who steals rich ore, especially gold, from a mine.

Salting – The act of introducing metals or minerals into a deposit or sample, resulting in false assays. Done either by accident or with the intent of defrauding the public.

Black Lung (silicosis) – A form of lung disease resulting from occupational exposure to silica dust over a period of years. Silicosis causes slowly progressive fibrosis of the lungs, impairment of lung function and a tendency to tuberculosis of the lungs.

Flumes – A **flume** is an open artificial water channel, in the form of a gravity chute, that leads **water** from a diversion dam or weir completely aside a natural flow. Often, the flume is an elevated box structure (typically wood) that follows the natural contours of the land. These have been extensively used in hydraulic mining and working placer deposits for gold, tin and other heavy minerals.

Arrastra – used to crush ore, often used in Mexico and South America. In a stone basin, eight to twelve feet in diameter, mullers (heavy rocks) were fastened to a horizontal arm and wheel. Either a mule or a man walked around the arrastra to turn the wheel, or water power occasionally was used.

Questions

Answer the following questions related to the history of mining in the South Park area and social aspects of mining.

When was the South Park small pox epidemic?

1860s

What are boom and bust cycles? Name the time period of a few.

See: Events affecting the U.S. Nonfuel Minerals Industry 1900-2000

What was the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and what effect did it have on mining?

1890 - Under the Act, the federal government purchased millions of ounces of silver, with issues of paper currency; it became the second-largest buyer in the world, after the government of India. In addition to the \$2 million to \$4 million that had been required by the Bland-Allison Act of 1878, the

U.S. government was now required to purchase an additional 4.5 million ounces of silver bullion every month. This act was repealed in 1893 causing a final bust in the mining communities of Colorado and the end of the silver mining era.

Describe transportation in Park County from the original gold rush through the automobile age. What was the impact of the railroad on mining?

Foot and horseback, stage lines, burro trains, railroad, automobile. The students might read chapter 8 of Bayou Salado and summarize.

What are some of the historic mining towns in Park County?

Montgomery, Quartzville, Dudley, Buckskin Joe, London Junction, Holland, Sacramento, Horseshoe, Mudsill, King, Hamilton, Tarryall City, Deadwood (See map at the back of Bayou Salado) The students might show this map and point out the towns possibly highlighting a special feature about each town, ex: King was the main coal producing area in South Park.

What impact did mining have on species? (Hint: endangered species greenback cutthroat trout)

What role did the Chinese workers play?

Chinese miners worked in the placers around Fairplay from the middle 1870s until the end of the century; they worked in the mines for very low (free) pay. In 1880 there were 124 Chinese workers. 2/3 were laborers, 1/3 miners and the rest were laundry workers, cooks, and housekeepers.

Why is South Park a Heritage Area and how did it become designated as a Heritage Area?

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress. Each National Heritage Area is governed by separate authorizing legislation and operates under provisions unique to its resources and desired goals. For an area to be considered for designation, certain key elements must be present. First and foremost, the landscape must have nationally distinctive natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that, when linked together, tell a unique story about our country. It is strongly recommended that a feasibility study be conducted prior to and designation attempt.

Information About the Designation

The South Park area has long been revered as a nearly pristine example of well-protected natural resources and existing historic mining and ranching structures. After many years of work to achieve the designation, in March 2009 Congress approved, and President Barack Obama signed, a bill designating the South Park National Heritage Area - one of less than 50 such congressionally designated areas in the United States that represent the history of the country.

What are some societal impacts caused by mining?

Some of the most important issues that the general public associates with mining include direct hazards such as the environmental impacts to surface water and groundwater, generation of dust, smelter emissions, changes in slope stabilities around excavations, potentially dangerous working conditions, land subsidence, and undesirable visual impacts.

Define sustainability and determine if mining or mine practices can be sustainable (BONUS).

Students can read the *Mining, Minerals, and Environment* publication, an *Overview of Best Practice Environmental Management in Mining* publication, and *Mining, Environment and Development*

publication, a series of papers prepared for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to decide if mining is sustainable.