

Gunnison County

Ruby (Irwin) District

The Ruby District is listed in Henderson (1926). Dunn (2003) describes the district as occurring in the west part of the Elk Range near Crested Butte. The **Irwin District** has been used as an alternate name and the name **Ruby Camp District** has been used.

Streufert (1999) describes the district as including deposits in the Ruby Range near Lake Irwin. Mindat.org (2015) extends the district to the east nearly to Crested Butte where it includes the large Mount Emmons molybdenum deposit (Dowsett et al., 1981), a definition that we use here. Vanderwilt (1947) describes the Ruby Mine, 10 miles northwest of Crested Butte, as the signature mine of the district.

The detailed geology has been described by Gaskill et al. (1967, 1987), Gaskill (1986), and Mutschler et al. (1981). Cretaceous and Tertiary sedimentary and igneous rocks are intruded by Middle and Late Tertiary igneous bodies, mostly granites and granodiorites. Veins containing zinc, lead, silver, copper, molybdenum and gold - mostly disseminated - are distributed through the rocks. Ruby silver deposits (proustite/pyrargite), from which the district and the mountains derived their name, were mined for a short period, mainly around 1880 and 1890.

Several towns and mining camps prospered for a short time in the area of the Ruby District. Crested Butte started as a gold camp but prospered later as a coal-mining town, starting in the late 1870s. The railroad and the Pearl Pass road to Aspen solidified the town's standing by 1882 (Eberhart, 1969). Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) ran several of the coal mines (three bituminous coal and three anthracite coal mines), constructing some 150 coke ovens. The mines operated until 1952, at which time work started on a facility to refine lead and zinc ore.

The nearby town of Irwin reached its zenith in 1882 with a mile-long Main Street. Among visitors were General Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Wild Bill Hickock and the Vaudeville King of the day Bill Nuttal (Eberhart, Ibid.). The town of Ruby prospered for a few years, as did Haverly and Silver Gate, which were probably just absorbed by Irwin (Eberhart, Ibid.)

Mines listed in the district (mindat.org; Eberhart, 1969) include:

- [Belcher Occurrence](#)
- [Bullion King](#)
- [Crested Butte \(Daisy Mine; Chautauqua; Daisy\)](#)
- [Crested Butte Limonite](#)
- [Crested Butte Mines](#)
- [Crested Butte Mining & Milling Company Group](#)
- [Daisy](#)
- [Emmon Mountain Mining & Milling](#)
- [Eureka; Fairview; Yellow Jacket; General Moltke Occurrence](#)
- [Forest Queen Mine](#)
- [Germania; Crested Butte Extension; Furniture Boy; Berrien; My Boys; Union Occurrence](#)

- Gunnison County Mines Rpr
- Jimmy; Keystone; Contact; Eclipse; My Boys; Union Occurrence
- Lead Chief
- Lead King
- Mountain Gem
- North Star; Free American; Bonny Kate; Oh Be Joyful; Little Daisey Occurrence
- Park City Consolidated Mines Company
- Peanut Mine
- Redwell Basin
- Waterfall Mine
- Redwell Basin Occurrence
- Ruby Anthracite Mine
- Ruby Chief Occurrence (Bird; Little Bonnie; Perhaps; Staten Island; Monte Cristo; No. 7; Bullion King; Crystal; Hopewell; Alfreda)
- Ruby Floresta
- Ruby King
- Smith Hill Mine
- Standard Mine

Minerals listed in the district (mindat.org) include:

Acanthite	Fluorapatite	Phlogopite
Andradite	Fluorite	Proustite
Anglesite	Galena	Pyrargyrite
Arsenopyrite	Glauconite	Pyrite
'Biotite'	Goethite	Quartz
Bournonite	Hematite	Rhodochrosite
Calcite	Jarosite	'Ruby Silver Ore'
Chalcopyrite	Kaolinite	Silver
'Chlorite Group'	'Limonite'	Sphalerite
'Coal'	Minium	Stephanite
'var: Anthracite'	Molybdenite	Tetrahedrite
Copper	Muscovite	Xanthoconite
Enargite	var: Illite	
'Ferro-tschemakite'	var: Sericite	

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