

Huerfano County

Sierra Blanca and West Blanca Districts

The area referred to as the **Sierra Blanca** and the **West Blanca Districts** are also referred to simply as the **Blanca District** at times. These all refer to the area in Western Huerfano County (and contiguous Alamosa County) along and, in places, over the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Range, between Blanca Peak on the south and Carbonate Mountain on the north.

The area was covered in reports of studies of the potential Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area. Johnson, et al (1984) considered the area around Carbonate Mountain, crossing the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Range, southeast of Great Sand Dunes National Park. The host rocks were interpreted to be highly deformed and metamorphosed Minturn Formation, containing gold, silver, and copper. The area was assessed to have a moderated potential for mineral development.

Several miles south of Carbonate Mountain an area spanning the boundary of Huerfano and Costilla Counties near Blanca Peak roughly corresponds to Dunn's (2003) Sierra Blanca District. There a gneissic tonalite and metadiorite contains veins with gold, silver, tungsten and copper. This area was considered by the authors as an area of high potential.

Scott (1986) looked at this area later for the U.S. Bureau of Mines. The area contains a system of several large veins called the Courthouse Vein System. He points out that 40 ounces of gold are reported to have been removed from the system, but this is probably only a fraction of the actual amount. He interpreted the area to be of high potential also, for gold, silver and tungsten with the possibility of tellurium and platinum resources. His estimates were 4 million tons with an average grade of 0.4 ounces gold, 8 ounces of silver and 0.01 per cent WO_3 . in these large quartz veins. His estimate at the time was a value of \$500 million at prices of \$300 per ounce for gold, \$6 per ounce for silver and \$0.04 per pound for tungsten.

In the Mineral Resources Data System (MRDS), additional commodities are listed for these districts. They are molybdenum, antimony, and tellurium.

Mines (Mindat.org and MRDS)

Hamilton Mine

Little Gerard Mine

Blanca Mine

Swab Mine

Coronado Group (includes Eagle Plume, Keystone, Jessie Mae, Divide End, and unpatented claims)

Minerals noted (MRDS)

Pyrite

Scheelite

Galena

Sphalerite

Tetrahedrite

Wolframite

Sylvanite

Calaverite

Hessite

Pearceite

Quartz

Calcite
Ankerite
Barite
Adularia

References

Dunn, Lisa (2003) Colorado Mining Districts: A Reference; Colorado School of Mines, Golden, CO.

Johnson, Bruce R, Lindsey, David A., Ellis, Clarence E., Hannigan, Brian J., and Thompson, John R., 1983, Mineral Resource Potential of the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Study Area, South-Central Colorado; U.S. Geological Survey Miscellaneous Field Studies MF-1635-A.

Scott, Donald C., 1986, Gold, Silver and Tungsten Resources of the Courthouse Vein System, Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Study Area, Alamosa and Huerfano Counties, Colorado; U.S. Bureau of Mines Open File Report MLA 52-86.

Vanderwilt, J.W., 1947, Mineral resources of Colorado. Denver CO: Colorado Mineral Resources Board.