

Gunnison County

Gold Basin District (aka Iris District)

The Gold Basin District lies at the northeast end of the **Gunnison Gold Belt** (refer to the **Gunnison District**). The district is located in the Iris and Iris NW 7.5-minute quadrangles, either within or adjacent to four other mining districts on the border of Gunnison and Saguache Counties: the Gunnison, the **Green Mountain**, the **Iris** and the **Cochetopa**. To further confuse the situation, the term **Cochetopa Creek District** has also been used (mindat.org, July 2015). Here we attempt to make some distinctions on the identity and location of these districts.

Henderson (1926) stated that the Gold Basin District adjoined the Green Mountain District and then stated that the Green Mountain was synonymous with Cochetopa District in both Gunnison and Saguache Counties. Dunn (2003) followed that example. Mindat.org equates the Green Mountain and the Gold Basin Districts in Gunnison County. Vanderwilt (1947) considered the Green Mountain, the Gold Basin and the Cochetopa the same, and does not mention the latter in his Saguache County section.

Afifi (1981), Drobeck (1981), and Sheridan et al. (1981) wrote about the general area of the Gunnison Gold Belt, but only Afifi mentioned any specific mining district, and he called this area the Iris District in the Iris and Iris NW quadrangles. Streufert (1999), in grouping districts by dominant deposit type, includes the Green Mountain District and the Gold Basin District as "mining areas" within the Cochetopa District, characterized by stratabound sulfide mineralization. Cappa and Wallace (2007) also use the name Iris District in northern Saguache County within the Gunnison Gold Belt.

The most informative description comes from Hill (1908). He described the districts this way: "There are two districts south of Tomichi Creek, the Gold Basin and the Cochetopa, within which a small area around Iris and Chance has been set aside as a separate mining district called Green Mountain." Because Hill provides this specific description originating at the time the districts were active, we have used this.

The geology and mineralization of the Green Mountain District is typical of the Gunnison Gold Belt (refer to the Gunnison District.) The mines in the area that have been specifically discussed include the Denver City and the Yukon (or Yukon-Alaska). Mindat.org lists the Denver City in the Green Mountain/Gold Basin District (it is located at the townsite of Iris) and the Alaska-Yukon in the Cochetopa District (this mine is located east of Cochetopa Creek at the far eastern boundary of the Gunnison Gold Belt). Hill (Ibid) provides detail on the Lucky Strike Mine (in Gunnison County near the town site of Chance).

Eberhart (1969) discussed the twin mining towns of Chance and Iris on opposite sides of the Gunnison - Saguache County line. Both founded in 1894, both towns saw a population of around 1,000 in their short heyday. Also, both towns faded in 1897, enjoyed a brief revival in 1901-1902, but died out again.

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

- Denver City Mine
- Gold Basin District Occurrence (Patented Claim: Belle Flora)
- Graflin Mine (Robert H.; E. S.; Hill Top 1-3; Indiana; Amazon; Capital Prize; Morning Star; Dalore; Carrie G.; Baltimore Boy)
- Lucky Strike Mine (Modoc; Horse Shoe; Belle Valaisane; Only Chance; Mammoth; Patented Claims: Lucky Strike)
- Lula Mine

Minerals listed in the district include:

Actinolite	Galena	Pyrrhotite
'Biotite'	Gold	Quartz
Calcite	Hematite	Sphalerite
Chalcopyrite	'Hornblende'	'Tourmaline'
'Chlorite Group'	'Limonite'	
Fluorite	Muscovite var: Sericite	

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