

## **Gunnison County**

### **Gunnison District**

A profusion of historic districts render southern Gunnison County a confusing area to decipher. The following is a list of fourteen districts associated with this part of the county:

- **Gunnison**
- **Gold Basin**
- **Green Mountain**
- **Iris**
- **Cochetopa**
- **Cochetopa Creek**
- **Cebolla**
- **Domingo**
- **Vulcan**
- **White Earth**
- **Powderhorn**
- **Kezar Basin**
- **Goose Creek**
- **Willow Creek**

Very little consistency is found in the use and description of these districts, so we will try to define them in a way that will be useful to students of mining in Colorado. We will try to point out the various definitions and descriptions used by earlier writers, but recognize there is no right or wrong, either with this report or any of the others that preceded it. Because of this, the assignment of specific mines to one district or another is different from one source to another.

For our purposes, most of the area of southern Gunnison County is considered the **Gunnison District**. These other districts all within the geographical boundaries of the Gunnison District and, in that way, can be considered "sub-districts."

Of those 14 districts, most occur within the metavolcanic-metasedimentary terrain characteristic of the Gunnison Gold Belt. The Powderhorn District is selected out to include the later (Late Precambrian - Cambrian) alkaline intrusions associated with the Powderhorn Carbonatite. The Vulcan District is listed separately because it is a famous and somewhat iconic district in a unique geologic setting even within the Dubois Greenstone.

The Gunnison District is defined to outline the area underlain by the Precambrian terrain known as the Dubois Greenstone Belt (Drobek, 1981; Sheridan et al., 1981; Hedlund and Olson, 1981). As a mining area, this terrain has been referred to as the Gunnison Gold Belt as long ago as 1896 (Lakes, 1896.) The Dubois Belt trends northeast from the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River for some 50 km and is 10 km or more wide, southeast of the town of Gunnison.

The rocks are attributed to submarine fumarolic activity by Drobek (Ibid) who described four major rock types "of interest":

- 1) metamorphosed arkose, siltite and graywacke;
- 2) metamorphosed water-lain volcanic flows of basalt to andesite in composition;
- 3) metamorphosed felsic tuffs, pyroturbidites and flows of dacite to rhyolite in composition; and
- 4) syn-to late-tectonic granite, granodiorite and diorite.

Sheridan et al. (Ibid) also point out abundant magnetite-bearing quartzite, probably representing seafloor chert beds.

Hedlund and Olson (Ibid) describe the zone as bounded by the Cimarron Fault on the south, where upper Cretaceous Mancos Shale is displaced against the Precambrian rocks. On the north, the Precambrian rocks dip under the Jurassic and upper Cretaceous sediments.

The style of mineralization is predominantly low-sulfide gold with subsidiary silver. Some lead, zinc, and copper were mined. Specific descriptions of mines and mineralization will be found under the individual districts.

Mines included in the district (mindat.org):

- Aberdeen Quarry (dimension stone)
- Gunnison District Occurrence (vein - Ag, Au, Pb, Zn, Cu)
- Rooftop No. 1 Occurrence (fld, qtz)

(Note: these occurrences are listed by mindat.org; all other mines described under the fourteen districts will, of course, be included within the Gunnison District.)

Additional references include: Afifi (1981); Hedlund (1974); Hedlund and Olson (1973, 1974, & 1975); Olson (1974, 1976a, & 1976b); Olson and Hedlund (1973); and Olson et al. (1975).

References:

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[www.mindat.org](http://www.mindat.org), accessed August 2015.