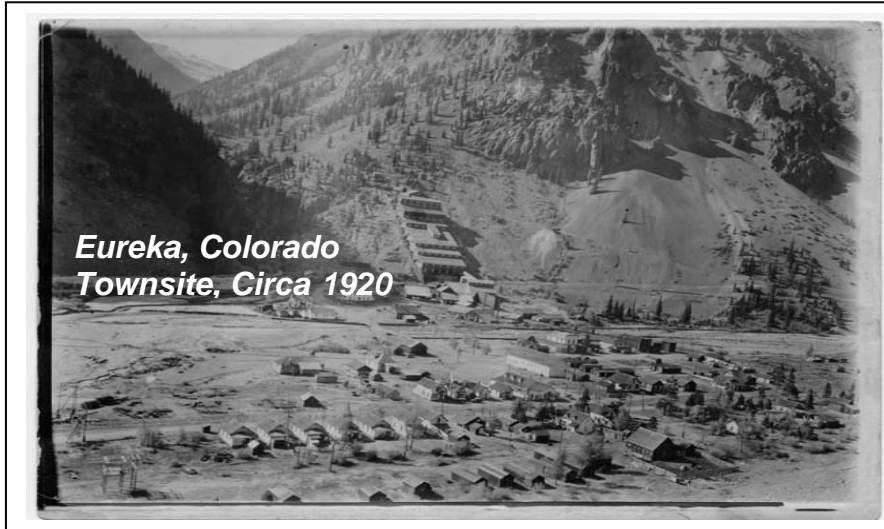


# **U.S. EPA Region 8 Revitalization Fact Sheet**

## **EUREKA TOWN SITE**

### **Mine-Scarred Land Initiative**

#### **Background**



The Eureka Town Site is located in southwestern Colorado, in the San Juan Mountains near the town of Silverton. It is one of those old mining town sites where the original town structures have all but disappeared. Historical mining practices resulted in disposal of mine tailings into waterways. Approximately one mile of the upper Animas River in Eureka is impaired by tailings from abandoned gold, silver, lead, and zinc mines. The Animas River valley floor is contaminated along this mile-long stretch.

Tailings have killed vegetation and are a major source of metal contamination that leaches into the Animas River. Historic mining sites and related complexes are an important and integral part of the basin's cultural heritage. A vibrant outdoor recreational tourism base, in conjunction with the nearby community of Silverton, serves as a theme for land reuse and community revitalization throughout the watershed and this site.

The State of Colorado has placed several segments of the Animas River on their impaired water bodies, Clean Water Act (CWA) 303(d) list. The main contaminants are metals and/or sediments from the impacts of historical mining. Several site characterization activities have been completed for the area and are factored into a master watershed restoration and revitalization plan.

#### **Stakeholders**

One key stakeholder group in this geographic setting is the Animas River Stakeholders Group. The Animas River stakeholders group is a collaborative effort involving a wide range of public and private interests whose mission is improving water quality and aquatic habitats in the Animas Watershed. The group is committed

to an interactive, open forum where all interested parties are involved in the design and implementation of a watershed restoration and revitalization plan. Other stakeholders include the San Juan County Board of Commissioners, Sunny Side Gold Mine Company, local residents and recreational visitors to the area. Currently, in partnership with the Animas River Stakeholders Group, Regional offices of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (USFS), Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) have a cooperative history in the area.

### **Initial Goals and Objectives**

The initial goal is to complete assessments and planning for land use scenarios and assessments for needed site clean up. Much of this work is already underway has been completed by the Animas River Stakeholders Group, including local, state, federal and private parties, or independent land owners. Consensus on implementation of a longer term vision for the Town Site needs to be completed. Much of this is also the subject of discussion within the local community.

### **Longer Term Goals**

EPA and other Federal partners hope to support, encourage, and help complete revitalization and redevelopment in the area. This is consistent with what the community hopes to accomplish. The community would like to encourage a land trade between the County, Sunny Side Mining Company and the BLM in order to consolidate parcels for better use scenarios (one example would be a multi-use recreational camping facility). The effort's longer term goals could be enhanced if other economic development groups (County, State, and Federal) were to get involved and support the effort.

### **Key Activities and Needs**

The site is currently identified, on a national basis, as a Mine-Scarred Lands Initiative (MSLI) Site. This means that EPA pilot project seed funding will be invested in the project by the EPA Brownfields MSLI Program. The main purpose of this effort is to demonstrate how the augmentation of existing environmental and watershed restoration activities can help lead to revitalization and then transfer this model to other western communities impacted by hard rock mine-scarred lands.

