

Pride of the West Mine Stope Closure - Cunningham Gulch
Silverton, Colorado

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Abstract. When mining ceased at the Pride of the West mine in southwestern Colorado, a 300' long by 35' average width stope was left on the side of Green Mountain. The feature is situated in a channel parallel to the flow paths of water from storm and snow melt events. Over time, the feature had collected snow and ice which, after spring thaw, would continuously melt draining through the mine into the lower workings and out the main portal. With this path, benign background water would flow over vein material lowering the pH and increasing metal concentrations. Discharge would be into Cunningham Gulch, a fairly pristine high mountain fishery. A closure technique was needed to secure the feature from accidental entry as well as preventing water infiltration. The biggest challenge was the feature's location being over 800 vertical feet from the nearest road. A coated steel closure was completed with helicopter mobilization. Funding was secured through a collaborative effort of state and federal funds.

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