

## **CASE STUDY: PEANUT MINE RECLAMATION PROJECT; GUNNISON COUNTY, COLORADO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Peanut Mine is located near the Town of Crested Butte in the central Colorado Rockies. The Peanut is an historic coal mine that was active in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Thousands of yards of anthracite coal waste materials, some of which displayed a propensity to spontaneously combust, were left at the site following abandonment.

Following abandonment of the coal mine, a silver mill was constructed at the site. The silver mill, which processed ore transported to the site from throughout Gunnison County, operated sporadically through the mid 1970's. Acid generating silver mill tailings were stored in impoundments situated within and immediately adjacent to the Peanut Mine site.

The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety; Inactive Mines Reclamation Program and Peanut Mine Inc, a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving open space for public use, formed a partnership dedicated to reclaiming this mixed waste site. This unique partnership not only overcame significant environmental issues, but was able to design and construct this abandoned mine restoration project using innovative reclamation and revegetation techniques, while providing for federal, state and local involvement at all stages of project design and construction. The Inactive Mines Reclamation Program was presented with the Excellence in Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation National Award by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining in 2008 for its reclamation efforts at the Peanut.