



Public is Safer After Abandoned Mines are Backfilled



The Vulture Mountains south of Wickenburg, Arizona, contain many old, abandoned hardrock mine sites, remnants of long-past gold operations. Today, this

is a high-use recreation area, especially popular with off-highway vehicle enthusiasts who use the old mine roads to access scenic backcountry areas. Because many of these roads were originally constructed to provide access to mine sites, recreational users can encounter hazardous mine features located next to the roads. Before they were secured, these caverns posed serious safety concerns.

The Vulture Mine Backfill Project is part of the BLM's Abandoned Mine Lands program. The competitive \$14,300 contract for this ARRA-funded project was awarded to Eagle Pass Construction, a minority owned firm. The contractor backfilled six open abandoned shafts located near regularly used



roads in the Vulture Mountains, completing the work in January 2010. The open shafts ranged from 60 to over 100 feet deep; most were abandoned nearly a century ago after gold mining ceased.

This reclamation work permanently eliminated the physical safety hazards these six open mines had posed to the public. The work also enhanced the viewshed by creating a ground surface that visually blends into the surrounding terrain.



Before: Shaft was more than 100 feet deep.



After: Shaft is closed and secured

