



Targeted Watersheds Grant Clear Creek, CO



The old Maud Monroe mine will be remediated and preserved as a historic mining tourism center.



Rafters on Clear Creek.



A sediment trap, which reduces metals and sediment flowing from orphan mine sites, is ready for clean out.

Clear Creek Watershed Foundation

The Watershed

The Clear Creek watershed, located west of Denver, Colorado extends from the Continental Divide at 14,000 feet to the South Platte River at 5,100 feet. The upper Clear Creek watershed, the focus of the project, is mountainous and rural, with large tracts of National Forest land that are a short drive from the rapidly expanding suburbs of Denver. Clear Creek is the primary drinking water supply for over 300,000 people. Several major industries, including the Molson-Coors Brewing Company and Henderson Mine, operate in the watershed and rely on its resources. Clear Creek also serves as an important recreational and ecological treasure, and its natural beauty and mountain vistas offer many opportunities for skiing, fishing, rafting, kayaking, hiking and biking.

Issues

More than half of the water body segments in upper portion of the mainstem of Clear Creek are impaired because of the area's mining legacy. The main stem of the upper Clear Creek and other segments are listed as impaired for cadmium, copper, iron, manganese, lead, and zinc, as well as aquatic life use. The trace metals primarily come from mine tailings and waste rock piles. In 1983 the upper portion of the Clear Creek watershed was designated a Superfund Study Area. Although many areas are being cleaned up, there are many "orphan" sites, with no responsible party to remediate the pollution.

Project Activities

- **Orphan Mine Remediation:** Many of the former mining sites are being cleaned up, but more work remains to be done where there is no identified responsible party. The Clear Creek Watershed Foundation was formed to develop a strategy to address the orphan mine sites.



Clear Creek Watershed

Partners:

- Coors Brewing Company
- Center for Resource Management
- Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association
- Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety
- City of Idaho Springs
- Historical Society of Idaho Springs
- Trout Unlimited
- University of Denver
- Clear Creek County

Funds Leveraged:

EPA Grant: \$554,090

Match in non-federal funds and in kind services: \$190,100

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- **Pollution Remediation and Market-Based Incentives:** After inventorying and prioritizing waste piles and source control opportunities, waste piles will be removed and sediment traps will be installed to detain metals and sediments. A maintenance program to clean out the sediment traps will utilize market-based/pollutant trading incentives to ensure continuous maintenance over the 20-year design life of the sediment traps.
- **Historical Site Creation at an Old Mine:** At one of the orphan sites, historical structures will be preserved with the goal of developing a historic mining tourism center at the old mine.



EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/twg>

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