

A photograph of an abandoned mine site. In the foreground, a large, rusted metal cylinder, possibly a tailings bin, lies on its side. A stream of reddish-brown water flows through a rocky area in the foreground. The background shows a hillside with sparse vegetation and trees.

# Good Samaritan Abandoned Mine Cleanups

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# Overview of Water Quality Impacts

- ▶ Historic mining occurred prior to enactment of environmental laws
- ▶ Limited resources to reclaim abandoned mines
- ▶ Releases of metals contaminated sediments and acidic water
- ▶ In Colorado
  - ▶ Over 17,000 abandoned mine features
  - ▶ Over 1,500 miles of streams and rivers impaired





# Stakeholder Approach

- ▶ EPA leads a multi-stakeholder approach to assess, prioritize and cleanup abandoned mines in Colorado and Montana
- ▶ Stakeholders include
  - ▶ Federal Land Management Agencies
  - ▶ State Agencies
  - ▶ Non-Profit Groups
- ▶ Assessments identify
  - ▶ High Risk Sites - CERCLA Clean-ups
  - ▶ Lower Risk Sites - Good Samaritan Candidates



## Good Samaritan Abandoned Mine Cleanups

- ▶ 2007 EPA CERCLA Liability management tools
  - ▶ Administrative Order on Consent
  - ▶ Comfort Letter
- ▶ 2012 EPA Good Samaritan Memorandum
  - ▶ EPA states that the Good Samaritan would not be the entity expected to obtain a CWA Permit for any remaining discharges at mine site.
- ▶ Evaluating other liability management approaches
  - ▶ Voluntary Cleanup Programs?
  - ▶ Brownfields Program?

# Good Samaritan Abandoned Mine Cleanups

- ▶ Water Treatment
  - ▶ Clean Water Act concerns has prevented Good Samaritan cleanups
  - ▶ Concerns based on 1992 East Bay MUD 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Decision. EDMUD was NOT a Good Sam, they owned and operated the discharge and rightfully should have obtained an NPDES Permit.



# Illinois Gulch Stakeholder Assessment Breckenridge, CO

- ▶ Multi Stakeholder Watershed Assessment
  - ▶ Puzzle/Willard Mine
    - ▶ Complex environmental issues
    - ▶ Draining adits
    - ▶ Large waste pile located in wetlands
    - ▶ Located adjacent to homes
  - ▶ Mountain Pride Mine
    - ▶ Excellent Good Sam Candidate site
    - ▶ Large waste pile locate adjacent to stream





# Illinois Gulch Site Mountain Pride Mine

- ▶ Trout Unlimited awarded Clean Water Act 319 non-point source grant
- ▶ Comfort Letter issued
- ▶ Private and US Forest Service property
- ▶ Consolidated 500 cubic yards of mines waste
- ▶ Revegetation of .5 acres
- ▶ 400 feet stream channel
- ▶ Summit County Open Space purchase private property



# Illinois Gulch Mountain Pride Mine





# Black Swan Site 2013 Colorado Floods



## Black Swan Site

- ▶ Home constructed on mine waste
- ▶ Four Mile Watershed Coalition
- ▶ HUD Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds obtained
- ▶ Administrative Order on Consent
- ▶ Work completed





# Black Swan Cleanup



Thank you

