

# NPL Site Narrative for Summitville Mine

## SUMMITVILLE MINE

### Rio Grande County, Colorado

Summitville Mine is located in the San Juan Mountains near Del Norte in Rio Grande County, Colorado. The 1,400-acre site is extremely remote at an elevation of more than 11,000 feet, making the site accessible by vehicle only in the summer months.

Mining began at Summitville in the late 1800s. The most recent operator, Summitville Consolidated Mining Corp., Inc. (SCMCI), began open pit mining and recovering gold by cyanide heap leaching in 1986.

SCMCI originally designed the mining operation as a non-discharging waste water facility. Problems with discharges eventually required SCMCI to obtain a NPDES permit from the State to operate a waste water treatment plant.

Several releases of water contaminated with cyanide and metals have been documented at the mine. The State has issued Notices of Violation to SCMCI for unpermitted releases of contaminated water. Fish kills have been reported from Wightman Fork downstream to Terrace Reservoir, approximately 20 miles downstream from the mine site.

Because SCMCI has declared bankruptcy, EPA is maintaining the site using CERCLA emergency funds to ensure that 150 million gallons of water contaminated with cyanide and metals are not released into Wightman Fork. Wightman Fork flows into the Alamosa River 5 miles downstream.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.