**Watershed groups gather experts to discuss future of mining and reclamation in the San Juans**

*Mining industry leaders and reclamation project managers from around San Juan Mountains will share insights about environment, water, regulations, and technical innovations*

OURAY, COLO. –Like most industries, mining has evolved over the years. Mine reclamation has also been in transition as regulations change and public awareness grows about environmental impacts. The seventh annual San Juan Mining and Reclamation Conference invites diverse community members to learn about the legacy of historic mining, explore the realities of contemporary mining and discuss the future of the industry. From May 23 to 26, the community is invited to several conference events scheduled in and around the city of Ouray, organized by a consortium of watershed protection groups and sponsored by trade associations, companies, government agencies and nonprofits.

 “Hard rock mining in the San Juan Mountains created the very communities we live in and call home. Even today, mining and mine remediation have a role to play in the economic health of our communities. However, to a large degree, recreation and tourism have replaced mining as the primary economic driver for the region, and they’re more sustainable. Through community dialogue we can clean up the past, mine more responsibly into the future, and foster the golden egg that feeds us today,” said Ty Churchwell, a conference presenter who is the San Juan Mountains Coordinator of the Sportsmen’s Conservation Project for Trout Unlimited.

Under the 2017 theme of “Coming Full Circle: Making a difference and forging ahead,” the conference will open with a community reception at the Wright Opera House on May 23 evening with Mining Lore – Tall Tales about Deep Places. This event is free and open to the public.

The main conference presentations will be on Wednesday, May 24 when the results of several reclamation projects and the trends in mining-related environmental issues will be shared by a dozen speakers. In the afternoon, a panel of experts will discuss the viability of hard rock mining in the San Juans, the current regulatory framework, socio-economic considerations, and impacts of mining heritage on the environment and local communities. The panelists are Bob Larson of Monadnock Mineral Services, LLC, Dave Beling of Bullfrog Gold, Frank Filas of Filas Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC, Pat Willits of Trust for Land Restoration, and Russ Means of the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety.  Plus, on May 24 afternoon, conference registrants will enjoy a poster and exhibit session about mining and reclamation projects.

On Thursday, May 25 in the morning, Camille Price of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety will talk about results of the Idarado Mine Remediation Project and Water Quality Improvements to date. Devon Horntvedt of Worthington Miller Environmental will continue presenting about the Idarado sites and scientific evaluation of emerging remediation technologies for further remediation work. The two presenters will guide a field tour up Red Mountain Pass to view the Idarado Mine site.

Also on Thursday, a field tour up Camp Bird Road above Ouray will visit the Ouray Silver Mines site and historic Atlas Mill, guided by Ouray Silver Mines CEO Brian Briggs, Briana Greer of Solid Solution Geosciences LLC, Jeff Litteral of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, Bill Coughlin of Western Stream Works, and Agnieszka Przeszlowska of the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership.

For full conference schedule and details, go to [mountainstudies.org/sjmrc](http://mountainstudies.org/sjmrc%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

The conference is organized by the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, Mountain Studies Institute, the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, San Miguel Watershed Coalition, Animas River Stakeholders Group, Animas River Community Forum, Willow Creek Reclamation Committee, and Lake Fork Valley Conservancy.

The conference is sponsored by Idarado-Newmont, Ouray Silver Mines, Harrison Western, H2 Enterprises, SRK Consulting, Triton Environmental, Green Age Technologies, LLC, and Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment. Additional sponsors include Frank L. Massard Trust, Trout Unlimited, Western Small Miners Association, Colorado Mining Association, ERTEC Environmental Systems, and Maser Consulting.