

Group 7: Geoheritage and Extractive Resource Industry

Based on a group “happy hour” discussion,
Wednesday, January 13, 2021

Background

- the opening of the United States to development and settlement in the 19th and 20th centuries was driven largely by extraction of resources such as timber, minerals, and water.
- In several aspiring geopark communities in **West Virginia (coal)**, **Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan (copper)**, and **the Gold Belt area of Colorado (precious and base metals)**, mining heritage underpins the key aspects of geoheritage.
- Conserving our mining heritage to tell these stories is important and requires an appreciation of this history.
- How we protect and commemorate these lands is a subject of active discussion and debate that forms a part of the larger discussion of America's Geological Heritage

Extractive Resource Industries

- Fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas)
- Uranium mining
- Construction materials (building stone, sand and gravel)
- Precious metals (gold, silver, Pt and Pd)
- Base metals (Cu, Pb, Zn, etc)
- Ferrous metal mining
- Gem stones

Specific ideas discussed

- Linkages of mining heritage with human history including indigenous cultures, migration to the US, and cultural development
- Explore dimension stone industry (building stone, cemetery stone heritage) e.g. Barre, VT; present in every state's buildings and monuments
- Museums – many states have small mineral and mining museums which reach a broad public audience
- Mining heritage and mining hazards (abandoned quarries, mine openings, acid mine drainage, etc)
- Mining heritage and environmental impacts
- Mining heritage and “responsible mining practices”
- Uranium mining and the WW II *Manhattan project – an untold story*
- Uranium mining and environmental and health hazards
- Importance of “non-technical” or general interest publications (including “story maps”) about a state's mining heritage

Idea/Suggestion:

- Formation of a working group on Mining Heritage to explore how U.S. mining heritage story can be melded with geoheritage and with the cultural, economic history. Use of the “*Linked-in*” platform for communications.
- Explore historical linkages between the U.S. mining history and development of the earth sciences.
- Propose a technical session for the 2021 GSA meeting to explore the role(s) of mining heritage in the development of the earth science concepts and practices and how mining has contributed to the geoheritage enterprise in the United States.