

Red Mountain Heritage Day

September 20, 2003

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

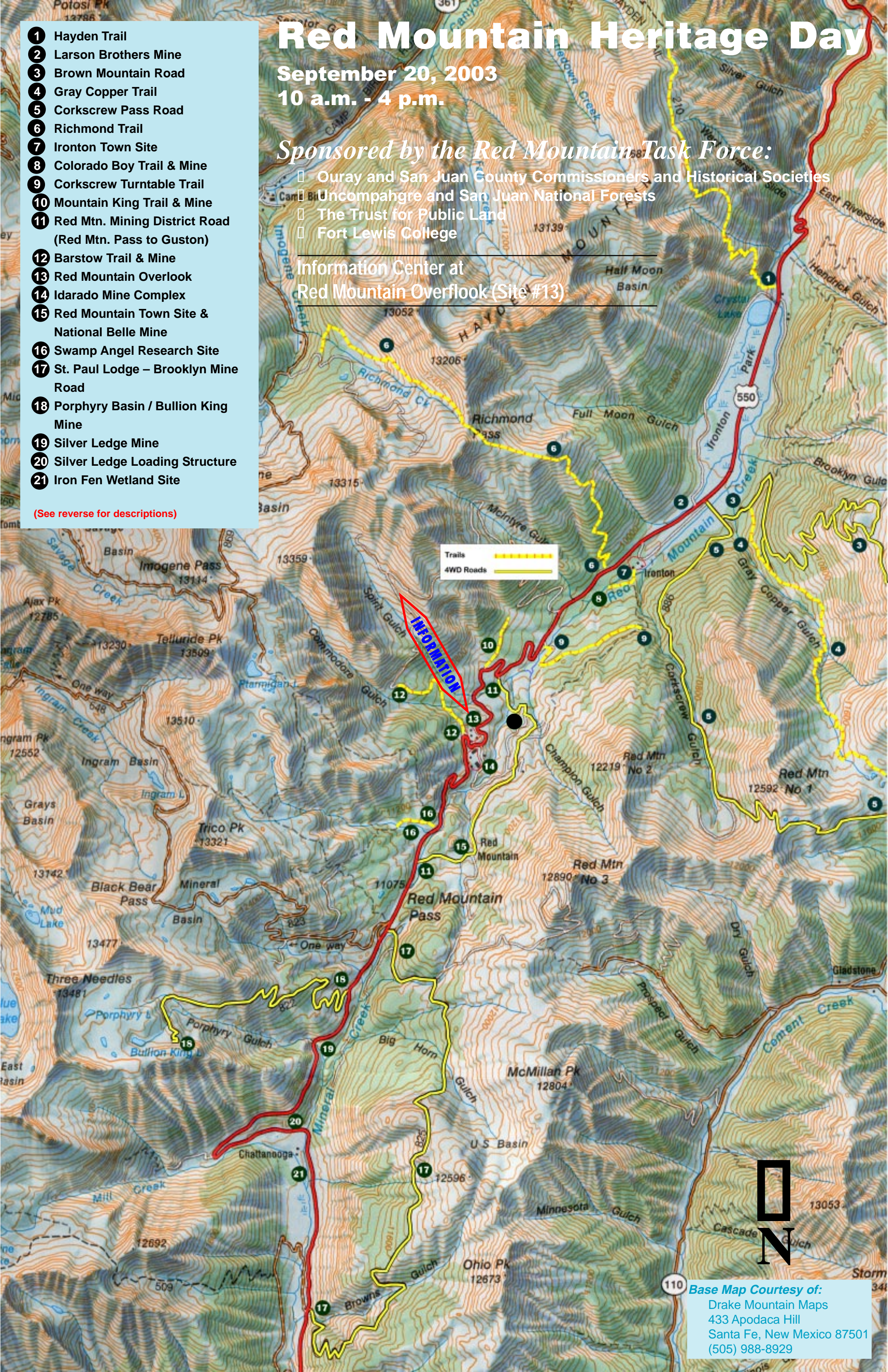
Sponsored by the Red Mountain Task Force:

- Ouray and San Juan County Commissioners and Historical Societies
- Uncompahgre and San Juan National Forests
- The Trust for Public Land
- Fort Lewis College

Information Center at
Red Mountain Overlook (Site #13)

- 1 Hayden Trail
- 2 Larson Brothers Mine
- 3 Brown Mountain Road
- 4 Gray Copper Trail
- 5 Corkscrew Pass Road
- 6 Richmond Trail
- 7 Ironton Town Site
- 8 Colorado Boy Trail & Mine
- 9 Corkscrew Turntable Trail
- 10 Mountain King Trail & Mine
- 11 Red Mtn. Mining District Road
(Red Mtn. Pass to Guston)
- 12 Barstow Trail & Mine
- 13 Red Mountain Overlook
- 14 Idarado Mine Complex
- 15 Red Mountain Town Site &
National Belle Mine
- 16 Swamp Angel Research Site
- 17 St. Paul Lodge – Brooklyn Mine
Road
- 18 Porphyry Basin / Bullion King
Mine
- 19 Silver Ledge Mine
- 20 Silver Ledge Loading Structure
- 21 Iron Fen Wetland Site

(See reverse for descriptions)



Base Map Courtesy of:
Drake Mountain Maps
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TRAILS

1. Hayden Trail. Built by early day miners to avoid paying the toll at Bear Creek, this challenging 5.6-mile trail begins at the north end of Crystal Lake in Ironton Park and connects to the Camp Bird Road. Suitable for only the most fit hikers, the trail climbs 2,500 feet in the first 2 miles. It is remote with fantastic views, very steep stretches and serious weather exposure.

4. Gray Copper Trail. To access this recently rebuilt trail, turn off SH 550 at the Corkscrew/Brown Mt. turnoff. At the first junction, turn left onto the Brown Mt. Road and go to Gray Copper Cr. crossing. After a short distance, look for a signed, steep road to the right. Park and begin your two-mile moderately difficult hike that passes scenic waterfalls and the Vernon Mine behind Red Mt. #1.

6. Richmond Trail. Look for a trailhead sign on the west side of SH 550 just south of the Ironton town turnoff. This moderate to strenuous hike has an elevation gain of 2600 feet. It begins in aspen forests and tops out at 12,667' on Richmond Pass, which offers beautiful views of the entire Red Mt. District and surrounding mountains.

8. Colorado Boy Trail and Mine. This easy ½ mile trail goes to the recently stabilized Colorado Boy mine headframe. Follow the flagging on the road south of Ironton town site; then take the first trail to the left that crosses Red Mt. Cr. on a foot bridge. The trail continues down the creek a short distance before turning right, then up a short, but steep, climb that levels out just before the headframe.



7. Ironton, ca 1902; County Road 20D. Originally known as Copper Glen, Ironton was a supply point in 1883 for the Red Mountain Mining District. By 1890, it was one of the largest towns in the district with 300 residents and many businesses. The Silverton Railroad reached Ironton in 1889. Over the years, fires damaged the town, which was in decline by 1900, largely because of the 1893 silver crash. By 1910, the population was 48. The last inhabitants, Harry and Milton Larson, began working and living in Ironton during the 1920's. Harry died in the 1940's, but Milton continued on until his death in the mid-1960's.



FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ROADS

3. Brown Mountain Road. This moderately difficult 4-wheel drive road departs SH 550 on Ouray County Road 20 immediately north of the large tailings reclamation site at the south end of Ironton Park. The road ascends Brown Mountain for several miles and offers great views of Hayden Mountain, and Red Mountain #1.

5. Corkscrew Pass Road, County Road 20A. Built originally as a trail connecting the Red Mt. Mining District and the Gladstone area, this moderately difficult and spectacular 4-wheel drive road passes between Red Mt. # 1 and #2. This route tops out at 12,217 feet and offers routes to Silverton via either the Gladstone/Cement Creek drainage or the Animas Forks ghost town and Animas River drainage.

11. Red Mt. Mining District Road. The easy 2.5-mile, 4-wheel-drive road winds through the heart of the district. Look for County Rd. #31 on the east side of SH 550 about 500 yards north of the Red Mt. Pass summit. The road passes by the Red Mt. town site, National Belle, Genessee Vanderbilt, Yankee Girl, and Guston mines and again intersects with SH 550.

17. St. Paul Lodge. Brooklyn Mine Road. San Juan Co. Road 14 departs SH 550 on the west immediately south of the top of Red Mt. Pass. This moderate/easy 4-wheel drive road is approximately 3.5 miles long and immediately climbs for a short distance before traversing under McMillan and Ohio Peaks and passing by the Brooklyn Mine complex. This route offers spectacular views to the south of the Three Needles, Lookout Peak and Ophir Pass.

18. Porphyry Basin/Bullion King Mine Road. Access to this area is via San Juan County Road 65 which is on the east side of SH 550 and approximately .5 miles south of the top of Red Mt. Pass. This moderately difficult 4-wheel drive road ascends approximately 1,500 feet in elevation to the Porphyry Basin area which features short hiking opportunities to lakes, small ponds, and beautiful rock formations, meadows and panoramic views to the east.

20. Silver Ledge Loading Structure.

See location on map. Site hosts on site.



2. Larson Brothers Mine/House.

The 1893 silver crash closed most mines near Ironton and many people left. Over the years, buildings were lost to fire, salvaging, decay, and Idarado's tailing pond flooded most of the townsite. But a few houses remained. One was home to Harry and Milton Larson, the last inhabitants of the area, who moved in during the 1920s to prospect. Harry died in the 1940s, leaving Milton behind as the sole resident until he died in the 1960's.

RESEARCH SITES OF INTEREST

16. Swamp Angel Research Site. A short 10-minute hike over moderate terrain will lead you to the Center for Snow and Avalanche Study's proposed research plot, which will be manned by the Center's Director who will explain the planned snow system research and education. Look for the sign and flagging locating the trailhead which is .6 mile north of the top of Red Mt. Pass and immediately west of SH 550.

21. Chattanooga Iron Fen and Wetland. Iron fens are a unique wetland found only in select mountain areas that are highly mineralized. This fen is located on the west side of Mineral Creek just below the historic town site of Chattanooga – watch for flagging and a sign for the turnoff that will take you to this interpreted site. As part of an extensive wetland complex, this iron fen features a *Sphagnum balticum* peat moss that is found nowhere else in the U.S. and otherwise does not occur south of Hudson Bay, Canada. Additionally, a rare liverwort, *Jungermannia rubra*, is also found in this wetland area.



10. Mountain King Mine and Trail

In 1878, before the famous Red Mountain finds of 1882, the Mountain King Lode was located on the east slope of Bear Mountain. It was sold for \$1,000, but wasn't worked actively until 1887. In 1906, Golden Lions Mines Co. took over and constructed several buildings and employed 23 workers. By 1943, operators cleaned and retimbered the first 400 feet of the tunnel and by 1984 had shipped 1,327,582 tons of shipping ore and 1,306,305 tons of milling ore. This trailhead is located on SH 550 approximately ½ mile north of the Red Mt. Overlook. Look for the trailhead sign and parking near the highway. The trail is on an old road into the Mountain King and is an easy .9 mile roundtrip hike.



15. Red Mt. Town Site

The discovery of silver-rich ore at the Yankee Girl and other mines led to the creation of Red Mt. Town in early 1883. Snow concealed the swampy nature of the first townsite, and in 1885 it was moved north to firmer ground near the National Belle Mine. The town included many businesses with 500 residents. The town burned in 1892, was rebuilt, burned again 3 years later, and was partially rebuilt. After short economic resurgence in 1907, the population dwindled to 26 by 1910, and the post office closed in 1913. A 1939 forest fire destroyed most of what remained.



12. The Barstow Complex and Trail

up Commodore Gulch changed hands several times from 1880, when it was patented, to 1899 when it had become the Red Mountain Mining District's largest producer. Gold, silver, lead, and some zinc and copper, were mined from a 4,155-foot tunnel and 465 feet of crosscuts. The Barstow operated until 1928 and was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1936. In 1939, Idarado Mining Co. incorporated and began mining it for base metals during World War Two, working parts of the complex until the 1970's. Access the Barstow Trail immediately above the Red Mt. Overlook. It is an easy 1.8-mile roundtrip hike with a 500-foot elevation gain.



14. Idarado Mine and Treasury Tunnel.

The Treasury Tunnel was established about 1896 with a track from the Silverton Railroad running to it. The site was abandoned by 1906. Between 1921 and 1924 the Million Dollar Highway was upgraded and the Treasury Tunnel was right on the roadway. With automobile access, operations expanded. By the 1930's, the San Juan Metals Co. was mining the tunnel and had built a new mill, boardinghouse, and offices. In 1939, the Idarado Mining Co. purchased mines in west Red Mt. Valley and expanded operations during World War Two and in 1946 the company built a new mill at its Treasury Tunnel operations. For years, Idarado ranked first or second in the state in copper, lead, zinc, gold, silver and cadmium production. Mining ceased in 1978.