ABSTRACT

TITLE:	The Effect of Superfund on Post-Industrial Communities: An Analysis of Geographic Identity
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ABSTRACT: The interactions between people and place have long been understood as producing an integrated dialogue between them. The forcommunicated paper deals the impact of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), or Superfund, on local communities and their sense of place in southwest Colorado. A literature review of relevant research was conducted, revealing the economic impacts of Superfund (mean 4 - 16.26% depreciation in property values) via hedonic regression analysis. Studies of the impact of outside stigma also demonstrated the endemic capacity of negative, outside outlooks to exacerbate the challenges of post-industrial development. Case studies were also gathered from other sources, covering the sequence of events in Toluca, Illinois; Cokedale, Colorado; Picher, Oklahoma; and Berlin, North Carolina. Common trends were observed in the recounting of said case stories that impacted the evolution of their geographic identity in dealing with site designation and remediation proceedings. Trends included the homogeneity of sense of place, community involvement in remediation efforts, existing alternative economic development, motivation on the part of the government itself, and a community's ability to cope with and combat outside stigma. These trends were then used to generate a case study of superfund proceedings in Durango, Colorado, and the remediation of the "Smelter" site, the location of the leftover tailings of the Vanadium Corporation of America. A predictive discussion was then undertaken with regards to the future remediation of the Bonita Peak Mining District, a newly listed site near Silverton, Colorado. In the cases of both Durango, and Silverton, there was observed to be high levels of community involvement and alternative exploration, namely into tourism, which suggests a positive ultimate outcome in each case. The final impact on Silverton's sense of place, however, would seem to depend upon the community's desire and ability to retain the artifacts of their hard-rock mining heritage, and to what extent they prove successful at doing so.