

La Plata District (aka California District)

The La Plata District lies in the La Plata Mountains of southwestern Colorado, northwest of the city of Durango, between the San Juan Mountains and the Colorado Plateau. Most sources recognize it is synonymous with the **California District**; Vanderwilt (1947) also notes the names of the **Oro Fino** and **May Day Districts** are associated with (or included in) the La Plata District. Dunn (2003) states that several "regional districts" are included, such as the **McQuiety District**.

The La Plata Mountains consist of a complex laccolithic terrain, 15 miles in diameter, with sedimentary rocks uplifted by numerous intrusions of dikes, sills, and stocks and subsequently eroded. The exposed sedimentary sequence ranges from the Pennsylvanian Hermosa Formation to the Cretaceous Mancos shale. All the igneous rocks are tertiary, characterized by Eckel (1947) as either porphyritic or non-porphyritic. The porphyritic rocks are nearly all monzonites and diorites, with syenites being added to the mix in the non-porphyritic portion.

Ore was first discovered in 1873, but only minor production occurred until 1900. From then until the 1930s, there was significant production, with the May Day and Idaho mines being the largest producers. Gold was the leading product, but silver and some lead and copper were also recovered.

The area is noted for its telluride minerals and for the large variety of minerals found in the deposits. Mineralization styles are predominantly veins and replacements of gold and silver-bearing telluride ores. However, a large variety of deposit types are present. Described by Eckel (1947), they are "disseminated deposits of platinum-bearing chalcopyrite; gold-bearing contact-metamorphic bodies; veins, replacements and breccia bodies of pyritic gold ore; veins of mixed base-metal sulfides with silver or native gold; chalcocite veins; and veins of ruby silver ore."

More detail of the geology and the deposits can be found in Cross et al. (1899), Eckel (1936a; 1936b), and Emmons (1905). Eberhart (1969) relates information on the mining camps of Parrot City, La Plata City, and May Day. Detailed descriptions of many of the mines listed below are contained in Eckel (1949).

Mines listed in the district (mindat.org and others) include:

- [Allard Tunnel Occurrence \(Audrey Nos. 1-2; Protection; Ruby Nos. 1-95; Shorty Nos. 1-4; Jane Nos. 1-4; Minnie\)](#)
- [Ashland - Ten Broeck Mines \(Parole Extension; Brawner; Patented Claims: Ashland; Ten Broeck\)](#)
- [Aurora Mine \(Patented Claims: Jim Smith; Jewel; Aurora\)](#)
- [Babcock Peak Magnetite Deposit](#)
- [Bay City Mine](#)
- [Bessie G Mine](#)
- [Bessie Jr; Oroverde Occurrence](#)
- [Black Diamond Mine](#)
- [Blackhawk](#)
- [Bonnie Girl Mine \(Baker Contact\)](#)
- [Boren Creek Shaft Occurrence](#)
- [Boren Gulch Group](#)
- [Brawner Tunnel & Mill](#)
- [Buffalo - Bristol Claims](#)
- [Bull - Dover et al Claims](#)
- [Camp Bird Prospect](#)
- [Century](#)

- Champion
- Charlene Prospect (Twin Canyon)
- Checkmaker
- Cherry Creek Occurrence
- Columbus Mine (Last Chance; Maverick; Columbus; Moonlight; Little Mack; Gold Cup)
- Copper Age Mine
- Cumberland Mine (Patented Claims: Cumberland; Judge Lamb)
- Cunningham (Cunningham Tunnel)
- Daisy - Hibernia Mine
- Durango Girl Mine (Patented Claims: Durango Boy; Durango Girl; New Hope)
- Eagle Pass Mine (Unpatented Claims: Bodie; Patented Claim: Eagle Pass; Roosevelt)
- East Mancos River Placers
- Escalante
- Esmerelda (Esmerelda Tunnel)
- Eureka - Bulldozer Mine (Patented Claim: Eureka; Unpatented Claim: Bulldozer)
- Farmer Boy (Former Bay on Topo Sheet; Lucky Four in Prof. Paper 219)
- Fraction
- George A. Greenwood Group
- Goff claim
- Gold Bar Placer
- Gold King - Swamp Angel Group (Patented Claims: Gold King; Swamp Angel)
- Gold King Mine
- Gold Nugget Group
- Gold Wedge
- Golden Girl
- Golden Rose
- Gracie I. Fox
- Grand View Prospect
- Grassy Hills (Grassy Hill Tunnel)
- Graves
- Greenhorn Prospect
- Ground Hog Tunnel
- Gustas Brothers
- Hamilton
- Hidden Treasure (Heck Mine)
- Honeydew Prospect (Del Rey)
- Idaho Mine
- Incas Mine
- Iridos Mine (Irodas Mine)
- Iron King
- J. L. Russell - Jim Smith
- Jennie Lind Mine (Patented Claim: Jennie Lind)
- Jewell Group
- John Graves Manganese Prospect
- Jumbo - Morovoratz Mine (Jumbo; Patented Claims: Morovoratz; Morovoratz)
- Junction Creek Claims
- Kennebec
- Klondyke
- La Plata
 - Copper Hill Mine (Gold Eagle; Delaware Claims)
 - Tippecanoe Mine (Laura A. Mill Site; Laura A.; Monitor; Cora G.; Patented Claims: Tippecanoe)
 - Unnamed Swamp
- La Plata River Headwaters
- La Plata River Placers
- Lady Eleanora Mine (Butterfly)
- Last Chance
- Lewis Creek Adit Occurrence
- Little Kate Mine (Patented Claim: Little Kate)
- Little Nona Mine (Unpatented Claim: Little Nona)
- Lost Mine (Unpatented Claim: Lost)
- Lucky Discovery Mine
- Lucky Four Mine (Delphic)
- Lucky Strike
- Mammoth Prospect
- Mark Thomas Occurrence
- Mary S.
- Mason Mine (Poverty Hill; Golden Eagle; Red Rock; Poverty Hill Group)

- May Day Mine
- May Rose Mine (Yuletide)
- Mineral Wonder Mine (Butterfly; September; Mineral Wonder; Stamboul and Butterfly Mines; Ruby Queen; Patented Claims: Stamboul)
- Monarch Mine (Eclipse; Jupiter; Sunshine; Monitor; Tip Top Mine; Platora; Happy)
- Montezuma Gold Reef Group
- Moonlight Prospect
- Mountain Lily Mine (Camp Bird; Timberline; Ramona)
- Muldoon Mine (Unpatented Claims: Independence; Cumberland; Patented Claim: Muldoon)
- Neglected Mine
- Omaha - Grant Smelter (?slag locality)
- Oro Fino
- Oro Negro Group
- P. W. Pittman Group
- Painter Placer Claims
- Parrott City
 - Comstock Mine
- Pat Lode
- Puzzle Mine (Unpatented Claims: Puzzle Nos. 4-9; Jennie Lind)
- R. M. Campbell Group
- Red Arrow
- Rosenite (Mars No. 0080670197)
- Ruby King Mine (Patented Claim: Ruby King)
- Sadie Mine
- Sarah S.
- Semanda Mining Property
- Shoo Fly Prospect
- Shorty Lode
- Silver Nugget; Lions Den Occurrence
- Small Hope Mine (Patented Claim: Small Hope)
- Snowstrom Mine (Patented Claim: Martha)
- Southern Boy Mine
- Suene De Oro
- Suprise Tunnel
- Swamp Copper Deposit
- Texarado Oil; Uranium Company
- Texas Chief Mine (Texas Chief and Mountain Meadow Groups; Mountain Meadow Mine)
- Timbrock
- Tippecanoe
- Tomahawk Mine
- Tripp Gulch Mine
- Uncle Sam
- Victor Prospect
- Western Belle Mine (Patented Claims: Western Belle; Golden Rose; Western Belle and Golden Rose Mines)
- Western View Mining Group
- Wheel of Fortune Occurrence (Bonaparte)
- White Diamond Tunnel
- Wyatt Myers Group
- Yellow Eye

Minerals listed in the district (mindat.org) include:

Acanthite	Argentotennantite	Bromargyrite
Aikinite	Arsenopyrite	Calaverite
Altaite	Augite	Calcite
Andradite	Azurite	Cattierite
Anglesite	Baryte	Cerussite
Ankerite	Betekhtinite	Chalcanthite
'Apatite'	Bobjonesite	Chalcocite
Aragonite	Bornite	Chalcopyrite

Chlorargyrite	Hessite	Pyrrhotite
'Chlorite Group'	'Hornblende'	Quartz var: Chalcedony
Chrysocolla	Kaolinite	Realgar
Cinnabar	Krennerite	Roscoelite
Coloradoite	'Limonite'	Sanidine
Copper	Luzonite	Siderite
Covellite	Magnetite	Silver var: Amalgam
Cuprite	Magnolite	Sphalerite
Dickite	Malachite	Stephanite
Domeykite	Marcasite	Stützite
Enargite	Melanterite	Sylvanite
Epidote	Mercury	Szomolnokite
Fluorite	Miargyrite	Tellurium
Freibergite	Muscovite var: Sericite	Tennantite
Galena	Ourayite	Tetrahedrite
'Garnet'	Pearceite	Torbernite
Gold	Petzite	'Tourmaline'
'Halloysite'	Pickeringite	Tremolite
Hematite	Polybasite	Uraninite
var: Martite	Proustite	Uranophane
var: Specularite	Pyrargyrite	Volborthite
Hemimorphite	Pyrite	Xenotime-(Y)

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