



Spotlight on DTSC

Cleaning Up An Abandoned Mine & Enhancing Tourism

[John Sutter](#) is synonymous with the gold rush, so it's fitting that the foothills community named after him would want to convert part of an abandoned mine into a tourist attraction. And the [California Department of Toxic Substances Control](#), which helps turn contaminated land productive, is helping shepherd the way.

Sutter Creek, a community of about 3,000 people in Amador County, wants to develop about eight acres at the stamp mill and head of the Central Eureka Mine (which operated from 1855 to 1953) into a historic park and walking trail. The city received two grants to conduct a voluntary cleanup of mine waste that contains arsenic, and DTSC is overseeing the work.

As it turns out, Sutter didn't actually do much mining and wasn't in the community that long, according to the [city's web site](#). But Sutter Creek became a supply center for miners in the area, and wants to capitalize on its rich history. "Tourism is the basis of our economy," said City Manager Sean Rabe.

DTSC is uniquely qualified to oversee the cleanup, and has several [abandoned mine initiatives](#) that help cities and other jurisdictions cope with the state's estimated 47,000 former gold and other mineral mines. DTSC has experience helping communities convert these once-contaminated sites into productive uses. A good example is Almaden Quicksilver County Park in Santa Clara County, once the largest mercury-producing mine in North America. DTSC presided over its [metamorphosis](#).

"DTSC's abandoned mine lands initiatives are an important part of our mission to protect the people and environment of California and restore brownfield properties to beneficial uses," said Randy Adams, DTSC's project manager on the Sutter Creek project. "The Central Eureka Mine Minehead site in Sutter Creek is a good example of this."

The Sutter Creek plan calls for covering mine waste and tailings in public areas including a walking trail with clean fill and/or asphalt, and leaving other sections closed and fenced off from the public. The city's subcontractor could start the field work in May, and finish capping the site this summer, Adams said.

Rabe said the city would apply for a grant to complete future phases, which could include lengthening the trail to view more mine buildings and have mine-related activities such as panning for gold and educational events.



DEPARTMENT *of* TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

The public has until March 11 to comment on the remediation plan. Comments should be sent to Randy Adams, project manager, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, CA. 95826, or by email to Randy.Adams@dtsc.ca.gov.



Photo of Central Eureka Mine head at sunset by Keith Breazeal Photography