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BEYOND SUPERFUND: HOW FOUR COMMUNITIES MARKET OUTDOOR RECREATION TO OVERCOME STIGMA

Kelley Christensen
Montana Tech of the University of Montana

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BEYOND SUPERFUND: HOW FOUR COMMUNITIES MARKET OUTDOOR RECREATION TO OVERCOME STIGMA

by
Kelley J. H. Christensen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Technical Communication

Montana Tech
2016
Abstract

This paper reports on how four American towns that have active Superfund remediation underway in their communities are attempting to overcome stigma associated with the cleanup in part by promoting outdoor recreation. These towns are located in high-amenity areas and are able to market a bevy of recreational opportunities. This paper analyzes the interviews of eight people (two from each town) and print promotional materials from each community to determine rhetorical marketing techniques employed by each place. Finally, this paper uses quantitative data from a variety of sources to analyze how effective the marketing rhetoric has been in recent years.

Keywords:
Stigma, Superfund, Outdoor Recreation, Marketing, Rhetoric, Place
Dedication

This thesis document would not exist without the contributions of a great many people.

First and foremost, to my husband, Shawn, and my son, Jonathan, for willingly accepting my frequent absences on nights and weekends to work on my degree assignments and my thesis. I hope those father-son trips to the Big Hole River weren’t too arduous.

To my committee members – Dr. Karen Sorensen, Kay Eccleston, and Dr. Michael Masters – for their thoughtful suggestions and insight. This would be a vastly inferior document without their assistance.

To my mother, Julie Lippold, for letting 3-year-old me pound away at that typewriter in the dining room, and for giving my childhood stories validation by laminating and binding them. You’re the one who set me on the path of writing.

To my father, Tim Hascall, for the “Hascall Family Values.” Though I’ve poked fun at them over the years, they’re an integral part of me and I’m thankful for a father who clearly outlined what excellence is: hard work and dedication.

To my family and friends for cheering me on.

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To the eight people who agreed to be interviewed for this thesis. It’s a scary thing, to trust your story to someone else. I hope I did it justice here.
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### Glossary of Terms

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<td>High-amenity area</td>
<td>An area located near national parks or forests, destination winter sport resorts, river or lake resources, or mountainous environments, and are aesthetically attractive.</td>
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<td>Stigma</td>
<td>Negative perception of a community and its inhabitants as contaminated because of environmental degradation.</td>
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<td>Superfund</td>
<td>Congressionally authorized law titled the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act to provide a federal “Superfund” to “clean up uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous-waste sites as well as accidents, spills, and other emergency releases of pollutants and contaminants into the environment” (EPA, 2015).</td>
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1. Background and Context

For many years, Butte, Montana, located within of the largest Superfund site in the United States, has struggled to market itself and attract new residents and more visitors. Marketing efforts have largely focused on industrial heritage tourism. Consequently, Butte has continued to hold a reputation of being a contaminated place (Dobb, 1996, p. 40). But Butte is not alone in this problem. Other Superfund-affected communities around the nation are also searching for ways to throw off the mantle of environmental stigma to rejuvenate themselves (Wernstedt, 2001, p. 309). This thesis outlines how four Superfund-affected communities are overcoming stigma by promoting local outdoor recreation, and by conducting a rhetorical analysis of place and environmental marketing through a series of interviews with community planners, activists, and elected officials. The communities studied by this thesis are Butte, Montana; Anaconda, Montana; Leadville, Colorado; and Berlin, New Hampshire.

The questions this thesis seeks to answer are:

- Can a town overcome Superfund stigma by promoting its positive attributes and downplaying its liabilities?
- What rhetorical techniques have Superfund-affected communities used to capitalize on their history and definitive “sense of place” to attract new business, tourism and residents?

Research investigating methods of overcoming Superfund stigma is limited, especially when that methodology relates to outdoor recreation and tourism. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) is now 36 years old, and it is important to analyze how communities that have benefitted from Superfund cleanup are navigating a new course into the future that rejects the assessment that they remain defiled after a
cleanup. While promoting outdoor recreation in these areas is likely not the “silver bullet” that will solve the problem entirely, it is be an important piece of the puzzle.

As America increasingly becomes a postindustrial nation with resource extraction-based economies in decline, communities are asking themselves what the price of progress has been (DeLuca, 1999, p. 57). Is the way forward through further industrial development, or should future progress be defined by taking back toxic waste sites and restoring them into usable landscapes by working outside the rhetoric of industrialism? This concept is a key point of Kevin Michael DeLuca’s groundbreaking text *Image Politics*. He notes that “within the discourse of industrialism, toxic waste dumps, strip-mined land, and other environmental problems are ‘the price of progress,’ the normalized cost of economic growth” (DeLuca, 1999, p. 42). This thesis seeks to analyze the rhetoric community members have used to “take back” degraded landscapes as recreation sites through promoting outdoor recreation in those areas. This chapter provides background information about four towns in the United States that are currently remediating Superfund sites in or near their communities. Each of these communities is also working to overcome perceived stigma of the community based on the presence of a Superfund site.

The goal of this thesis – to outline how Superfund-affected communities can use outdoor recreation promotion to overcome stigma – is built on the scholarship of others. Work done in the area of Superfund stigma includes research by Montana Tech graduate Chelsea Newman and James Madison University professor Chris Colocousis. Newman, in her graduate thesis, examined how Butte markets itself on billboards on interstates 15 and 90. Similarly, Colocousis describes how Berlin, New Hampshire, is attempting to overcome Superfund stigma with recreation tourism (Colocousis, 2012, p. 758). This thesis dovetails on Newman and Colocousis’ work by combining an exploration of rhetoric as Newman’s thesis did, and by researching how
recreation tourism can help a place overcome Superfund stigma, as did Colocousis’ work. This
body of work also includes Stacie Barry’s doctoral thesis concerning the health of the
community (Barry is operations director at the National Center for Appropriate Technology), and
Bridget Barry’s master’s thesis (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) about “toxic tourism” and
promoting Butte’s industrial heritage. Each of these contributions seeks to examine at length
Butte’s perceived image and discuss what is and what is not working to change that image for
the better. The significant issues related to this thesis are how place matters to residents and
tourists alike, and how environmental degradation and resulting stigma have a powerful effect on
the perception of a place. Additionally, targeted marketing aims to set a community apart; Butte
is a fundamentally different place than neighboring cities Bozeman and Missoula, but it also has
the advantage of promoting itself not only as a great place to hike, bike, or ski, but also as a
fascinating historical area.

A crucial assumption in this approach is that promoting outdoor recreation is effective in
redeveloping image. Another assumption is that this approach is just one aspect of redefining a
place’s image. Other approaches include redevelopment of core business districts, promotion of
abundant and affordable housing, and quality employment.

1.1. Superfund and Superfund/Place Stigma

In 1980, Congress passed CERCLA to provide a federal “Superfund” to “clean up
uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous-waste sites as well as accidents, spills, and other
emergency releases of pollutants and contaminants into the environment” (EPA, 2015). The
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through CERCLA, seeks out potential responsible
parties to assure that they cooperate with a cleanup; the EPA cleans sites where a responsible
party cannot be identified. Congress reauthorized the act in 1986 to include in the Superfund law
the requirement that EPA to include community input in remediation and restoration decisions. However, Congress let the taxes on crude oil and chemical companies that financed the “Superfund” to expire in 1995, and CERCLA is now funded American taxpayers and there is little money remaining. Because the EPA has had to appropriate public dollars for Superfund cleanups, the rate at which cleanups occur has slowed, from 89 in 1999 compared to 19 in 2010.

Unfortunately, following Superfund site listing, some communities where these site are located becomes stigmatized as tainted. Some literature has focused on what the stigma of a Superfund site/area means to the community within the boundary of that area, and how people outside that area perceive the community in question. Stigma finds its root in the Greek; a stigma was a mark made by branding or pricking. That term has come to mean, as Gregory and Satterfield note, “certain products, places, or technologies marked as undesirable and therefore shunned or avoided, often at high economic, social, and personal costs” (2002, p. 347). Stigma has stripped some American communities of their residents and of their ability to grow economically. Such is the case of Berlin, New Hampshire.

Berlin is a postindustrial mill town that faces the residual ghosts of an extraction-based industry. Closure of the Berlin’s primary economic driver – the pulp mill – and its subsequent 2005 Superfund listing affected the community’s ability to transform itself into an amenity-based town, Colocousis writes. He describes how Berlin, despite its location in an amenity-rich area within a tourism-dependent region, continues to struggle to move beyond its past. Despite nearby towns flourishing as tourism hotspots, Berlin is still perceived as dirty and a place where only deadbeats live (Colocousis, 2012, p. 764). Even though the pulp mill closed a decade ago, the town is still perceived negatively by outsiders. Colocousis also discusses how the town’s positive identity of itself – a community populated by people with strong work ethic who worked hard at
a once extremely prosperous mill – is poisoned by the negative connotations and perceptions of the industry from which that very identity is derived. (Colocousis, 2012, p. 763). As a move away from its previous identity, Berlin changed its logo from one representing the stack of the paper mill to a logo that doesn’t feature the mill and instead depicts a picture of quaint mountain town. This effort has had little effect, however. While the community has moved away from images of pollution, a new theme of decay now defines the place (Colocousis, 2012, p. 772). This cautionary tale warns that despite a community’s proximity to amenities, that doesn’t mean a Superfund-scarred community can bounce back from degradation and decreasing population easily (Colocousis, 2012, p. 773).

The difficulty of overcoming stigma is the primary theme of an article by Gregory and Satterfield about how Superfund stigma is formed. The authors discuss how activities (like mining or logging) that were once held in high regard by society have come to be perceived as shortsighted or even evil, and how that perception dramatically colors a community’s perception of itself (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002, p. 348). This negative perception in turn affects the purchasing habits of consumers, who curtail their spending and cause the downturn of the industry in question. The authors define five identifying features of stigma:

- The perceptions of risk and that exposure comes with terrible consequences
- The nature in the area has been thoughtlessly destroyed
- The impacts of the activity disproportionately affect vulnerable groups like children and pregnant women
- The magnitude of the impacts will only become known over time
- The management of the hazard is questioned because the community failed to use proper precautions. These risks in turn affect the psyches of the people who live in the area
despite the truth or probability of said risks, and exacerbates the negative feelings (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002, p. 351).

The perceived link between a contaminated environment and a contaminated people makes it difficult to recruit new residents. The authors suggest that mitigating the negative perceptions by addressing the wellbeing of people in the area is necessary no matter how difficult (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002, p. 357). Communities in high-amenity areas are well positioned to address the wellbeing of residents because of outdoor recreation access.

Fear that stigma can arise from a Superfund listing remains even 36 years after CERCLA was signed into law. In August 2015, an EPA crew accidentally released millions of gallons of liquid mine waste laden with toxic heavy metals from a waste pit at the Gold King mine near Silverton, Colorado. The toxic water ran into the Animas and San Juan rivers before reaching Lake Powell and the lower Colorado River, coloring the rivers a sickening orange during its journey. Thousands of people rely on the water from those rivers for drinking, irrigation, and recreation. An August 11, 2015, Associated Press article titled “Fearing Stigma, Colorado contested Superfund status for mine” written by Ivan Moreno and Ellen Knickmeyer, noted that San Juan County has resisted a Superfund listing of the Gold King mine for nearly 25 years. A rationale given for this resistance was offered up by San Juan County commissioner and former Silverton mayor Ernest Kuhlman: “How many people want to go to a Superfund site for tourism or recreation?” The authors of the article also note that community members worried a Superfund listing would sink property values and limit investment (Moreno & Knickmeyer, August 11, 2015).

However, the article suggested that if the community had allowed the EPA to list the Gold King mine for priority cleanup, it is likely that this disaster could have been prevented. Paul
Voosen notes that Superfund-affected communities are everywhere in America in his *National Geographic* article “Wasteland”; 49 million Americans live within three miles of a hazardous waste site (2014). Many people are simply unaware that they live so close to one of the 1,700 active Superfund sites in the United States. However, other communities are painfully conscious of the presence of toxins near or within their city or town, and unfortunately so are the tourists. Communities that might otherwise be considered perfectly charming find themselves stigmatized as dirty and downtrodden because of a nearby Superfund site. Unlike Silverton, Colorado, numerous communities in the United States chose the path of cleanup rather than resistance despite the consequences of stigma. And for these cities and towns, there must be a point at which attempts are made to overcome that stigma, purely for space and economic reasons. As ecologist Erle Ellis of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, observed: “Brownfields are important to cities. In a sense they’re waste, but so is manure. It’s just something that needs to get recycled” (Voosen, 2014, p.136). In other words, there’s no such thing as making new land so eventually the despoiled places among us will by necessity be pressed into use again.

This recycling of Superfund sites and potential barriers to do so was the subject of a 2014 Lewis and Clark College case study of the McCormick and Baxter Superfund site beside Portland Harbor in Oregon. The City of Portland, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, EPA, and University of Portland officials have gone back and forth to determine a new use for the now-defunct creosoting site where 41 acres of land, and 23 acres of the Lower Willamette River were contaminated by arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and hydrocarbons between 1944 and 1991(Kliess, 2014, p. 6). Officials and area residents worried about exposure to toxins if the area is converted into a park or greenway trail, felt anxious about possible gentrification of the area if a mixed-use business/residential development occurred, and felt
unease that any new use at all would strain already overtaxed infrastructure in the area. “It seems that the McCormick and Baxter property faces significant barriers to redevelopment that can be attributed to Superfund stigma” (Kliess, 2014, p. 24). The University of Portland acquired the site despite lingering concerns that it might in the future become liable for additional cleanup. The university seems determined to develop the site as a place for its students to learn about environmental degradation and restoration, as well as a recreation area. Though from the outside looking in there hardly seems to be anything negative about the plan, the case study notes that utmost care should be taken to “avoid reusing the site in ways that at best could benefit only certain people, or at worst negatively impact entire populations of North Portlanders” (Kliess, 2014, p. 25). These concerns rooted in environmental justice should always be taken into account during the reuse of a Superfund site, but must be balanced to avoid creating a situation of perpetual indecision.

1.2. Place Marketing and Outdoor Recreation

As the primary industries of America shift from extraction-based to amenity- and service-based, the populations of amenity-rich areas are increasing rapidly. For example, the population of Teton County, Wyoming, where Jackson is located, grew 39.4 percent between 1990 and 1995 (Beyers & Nelson, 2000, p. 463). But the same isn’t necessarily true for communities marked with the scars of extraction – where the signs of mining and clear-cutting remain (Bryson & Wyckoff, 2010, p. 65). But as communities like Butte grow almost imperceptibly while nearby Missoula and Bozeman boom, it’s critical to consider that the presence of a Superfund site does not preclude a community from becoming a boomtown once again. As the fabric of America changes, Superfund-affected communities in high-amenity areas must find a way to attract new residents or dwindle into ghost towns. The place for Superfund-affected communities to begin is
to create a new, positive image. The use of targeted rhetorical narrative and place marketing may change perceptions and attitudes for the better. As noted by a recent report by the Sonoran Institute, communities must engage in active “placemaking”, which focuses on creating public spaces that are attractive and enjoyable aesthetically and function economically. By deliberately creating public spaces that attract people and activity using such tactics as public art and improved street design, communities can foster a strong “sense of place” (Community Builders, 2015, p. 7). The “Place Value” report describes results from a survey of nearly 1,000 participants in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming to determine why people and businesses are attracted to particular Rocky Mountain West communities.

The report details how the single most important factor for a business to relocate to a community is the quality of life (Community Builders, 2015, p. 10). The third and fourth most important factors for a person to relocate to a new community, the report noted, were recreation access and close proximity to trails and open space – the first and second most important factors were safety of the community and overall quality of life, respectively (Community Builders, 2015, p. 15). The tax structure incentivizes business development, but availability of outdoor amenities is just as important to community development.

People are attracted first to communities, then to jobs within those communities, not the other way around. It’s therefore incumbent on a community to demonstrate why people should relocate there, and access to recreational opportunities is the prime place to begin. Social factors, rather than economic factors, dictate where people choose to live and work. Telecommuting and flexible work arrangements make this modern sort of prioritization possible. Rudzitis indicates that area amenities accounted for a vast majority (77 percent) of the reasons a person moved to a new community in the region versus just 23 percent of employment-related reasons (1999, p.
The commercial value of places has in the past few decades been eclipsed by intrinsic value. “The economic value of many places and regions may well be enhanced by preserving, sustaining, and strengthening both the physical and social environment within which they exist. Maintaining a high-quality environment can become a development strategy” (Rudzitis, 1999, p. 13). In towns affected by Superfund, emphasizing the existing social network as welcoming, and striving to remediate and redevelop these communities into a high-quality environment will only increase their attractiveness to outsiders.

Communities must make a diligent and concerted effort to change negative perceptions rather than stand idly by while outsiders craft their own opinions of a place. “Mega events” like festivals, sports tournaments, and food fairs play an essential role in correcting negative image (Ahmed, 1991, p. 26). Ahmed suggests inviting opinion leaders – magazine writers, national TV personalities, authors, politicians – to the community to show off the town on a nationally broadcast stage. Ahmed urges communities to bid to host national and international conventions. He writes that travelers will only consider going to a place when their positive perceptions outweigh negative ones (Ahmed, 1991, p. 27). Butte, Montana, often plays host to these mega events, including the Montana Folk Festival, Evel Knievel Days, An Ri Ra Irish festival, the Butte 100 Bike Race, the Original Festival, the recently added SnoFlinga Winter Festival, and numerous state high school competitions. These events are growing annually in both popularity and attendance.

Similarly, tourists form opinions of places they’ve never been based on representations of a place such as in print materials or by word-of-mouth (Compelo, Aitken, & Gnoth, 2010, p. 3). Creating a false, too-good-to-be-true image campaign isn’t the answer, but rather communities should strive to brand themselves with the identity and ethos of the place in mind in an authentic
way (Campelo et al., 2010, p. 10). Marketers should represent a community’s *ethos*, and
celebrate the place’s traditions, lifestyle, and culture while avoiding misrepresentations
(Campelo et al., 2010, p. 3). A place can be marketed honestly while still giving a representation
of the best parts of that community.

Newman, in her development of the Butte billboard marketing campaign thesis project, notes
that Butte’s industrial tourism and promoting Butte’s environmental degradation is not an
effective way to attract visitors to the community (Newman, 2014, p. 46). She observes that
while surrounding communities like Helena and Anaconda tout their access to outdoor recreation
loudly and proudly, Butte makes little mention of similar access (Newman, 2014, p. 63). By
conducting a perception campaign, Newman discovered that a positive and repetitious branding
effort does work to change the way Butte is viewed by outsiders. By promoting Butte’s positive
culture codes – history, nature, celebration, and virtue – Newman contends the community will
become less and less associated with its negative culture codes – poisoned, beat, vicious,
abusive, and harsh (Newman, 2014, p. 36, 38). Survey results derived from Newman’s positive
billboard campaign demonstrated its effectiveness among visitors, as well as among citizens of
Butte (Newman, 2014, p. 48). Newman urges Butte to follow in the footsteps of places like
Yellowstone and Glacier national parks to market its scenery, and to provide a sense of place

### 1.3. Selected Communities

The four communities selected for this thesis were chosen for two reasons. First, each of
these is host to a Superfund site, either within the community’s boundaries or very near to the
community. Second, each of these communities is located in a “high-amenity area”. High-
amenity areas are located near national parks or forests, destination winter sport resorts, river or
lake resources, mountainous environments, and are aesthetically attractive (Winkler et. Al, 2007, p. 480). High-amenity areas are close to outdoor recreation, and therefore are more easily marketed as a tourism destination than a place that is not in a high-amenity area.

### 1.3.1. Butte, Montana

Butte is the fifth largest city in Montana with a population in the 2010 census of approximately 34,200. The city was founded in the 1870s and became the consolidated city-county of Butte-Silver Bow in 1977. Named for the extinct volcano on its western shoulder, Butte began as a rough-and-tumble mining town. The first miners sought gold and silver, but Butte’s abundant copper ore deposits propelled the community’s economy forward. In the early 20th Century, Butte boasted an estimated population between 60,000 and 100,000. Many miles of mining tunnels crisscross the Butte Hill, some of which descend more than a mile deep. Headframes, the black steel elevators that lowered men into the mines and lifted the ore and waste rock out of the earth, dot the hill as reminders of the underground mining era that continued for more than a century. In the 1950s, mining on the Butte Hill began to transition toward open pit copper and molybdenum extraction, which continues today at the Continental Pit owned by Montana Resources, a Dennis Washington company. Underground mining in Butte ended in 1982. A lack of environmental protection regulations prior to 1980 and extensive mining and smelting operations have left Butte with the largest Superfund complex in the United States.

The site is host to seven active operable units (there are 13 total operable units):

- Streamside Tailings, which includes a 26-mile stretch of Silver Bow Creek.
- Butte Mine Flooding, which includes the contaminated groundwater in the underground mining workings below the city of Butte and the water in the Berkeley Pit.
• Butte Priority Soils, which includes soil and attic dust in parts of the city contaminated by mining and smelting operations, as well as mining-impacted alluvial groundwater and surface water.

• Warm Springs Pond (there are two areas, one active and one inactive, to comprise two operable units), which includes the 2,600-acre pond area used to treat Silver Bow Creek prior to its confluence with the Clark Fork River. This pond is catch-and-release fishing only because of the presence of heavy metals.

• Rocker Timber Framing and Treating, which includes arsenic-contaminated soil and groundwater from a timber treating facility.

• West Side Soils, which includes mining-impacted areas not included in the Butte Priority Soils operable unit (EPA Region 8, n.d.).

• A separate operable unit, the Montana Pole and Treating Site, is located along the banks of Silver Bow Creek beside Interstate 15/90.

In the Summit Valley, where Butte is nestled near five mountain ranges, is a bevy of outdoor recreation activities. On Butte’s East Ridge, the Maud S trail climbs the granite spine to connect with the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. The Whitetail-Pipestone area has miles of all-terrain vehicle trails and world-class rock climbing. To the north of Butte, the groomed trails at Moulton are popular with cross-country skiers and snowshoers. On the backside of Big Butte lies the Big Butte open space and its mountain biking trails. South of Butte in the Highlands Mountains are countless trails and lakes in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, the largest forest in Montana. Silver Bow and Blacktail creeks pass through the center of Butte, and thanks to restoration efforts now host native west slope cutthroat trout populations. The city-county government is slowly adding to the network of walking and biking trails that
zigzag across the community, many of which are on former train rail beds. Just 20 minutes south and west of Butte snakes the Big Hole River, arguably the finest trout fishing river in the state.

1.3.2. Anaconda, Montana

Anaconda is Butte’s sister city, located 25 miles to the west at the base of the Anaconda Range, with a population in the 2010 census of approximately 9,300. Also a consolidated city-county, Anaconda-Deer Lodge County is home to the Anaconda Company Smelter, which smelted the copper ore from Butte until 1980. The smelter is 585 feet tall, and is immediately visible to anyone driving into the community from the east.

The Anaconda Co. Smelter Superfund site encompasses 300 square miles where smelting activities contaminated soil, surface and groundwater with arsenic, copper, cadmium, zinc, and lead. The overall site is divided into five active operable units:

- Mill Creek, which includes relocating all residents and removing debris and contaminated soils, was completed in 1988, though operations and maintenance are ongoing.
- Flue Dust, which placed 316,500 cubic yards of flue dust an engineered repository and was completed in 1996, also with ongoing operations and maintenance.
- Old Works/East Anaconda Development Area, which includes the Old Works Golf Club, is a cap over contaminated soils and includes surface water controls.
- Community Soils, which is a program to remove arsenic-contaminated soils from residential properties and replace that dirty dirt with clean soil.
- Anaconda Regional Water, Waste and Soil, which includes treating contaminated soils, storm water controls, and monitoring ground water in domestic wells (EPA Region 8, n.d.).
Yet this picturesque community is located within minutes of hiking and biking trails, as well as access to numerous rivers and lakes in the Anaconda Range, including the Georgetown Reservoir. Mount Haggin State Wildlife Management Area provides groomed trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The Old Works Golf Club, part of the Superfund remedy, is a Jack Nicklaus-designed 18-hole course. Washoe Park, at the heart of the community, is home to a well-populated duck pond, a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks trout fishery, and towering cottonwood trees. The park hosts numerous festivals and sporting events throughout the year. The popular Washoe Theater, constructed in Nuevo Deco style, lights up the night with its dazzling neon. Discovery Ski Area nearby has runs for every skill level of skier and snowboarder.

1.3.3. Leadville, Colorado

Leadville, Colorado, is one of the highest communities in elevation in the continental United States at 10,152 feet above sea level, and had a population in the 2010 census of approximately 2,600. Founded in 1877, it’s a former silver mining town at the headwaters of the Arkansas River situated between two mountain ranges. Three years after its founding, the community had a population of 15,000, 30 mines, and 10 smelting works producing gold, silver, zinc, copper, and lead. The Climax Mine, like the Continental Pit in Butte, produces molybdenum, and is still in operation to this day.

The California Gulch Superfund site encompasses an 18-square mile area in Lake County. It includes the historic mining district, the town of Leadville, and a section of the Arkansas River. Soils and surface and groundwater are contaminated by mining activities. Originally divided into 12 operable units, some sites have been removed from Superfund listing, though eight of the sites are still active:
• Yak Tunnel, a water treatment plant that is credited with improving the water quality in the Arkansas River,
• Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Slag Piles, Railroad Easement, Railroad Yard, and the Mineral Belt Trail, which are being maintained with institutional controls but may warrant further investigation.
• Upper California Gulch, which includes the watershed above the portal of Yak Tunnel and consists of water diversion tunnels and settling ponds to prevent heavy metals from entering surface water.
• ASARCO Smelter/Colorado Zinc-Lead Mill, which includes contamination associated with smelting that has been consolidated under a soil cap.
• Apache Tailings, which is capped and is being considered for removal from the site.
• Arkansas River Floodplain, in which revegetated reclaimed areas are being monitored with institutional controls.
• Sitewide Surface and Groundwater Quality, which will be monitored long-term due to the technical impracticability of treating elevated contamination levels (EPA Region 8, n.d.).

Leadville is situated within the San Isabel National Forest and surrounded by three wilderness areas. Mount Elbert, located 16 miles southwest of Leadville, is the tallest summit in the Rocky Mountains at 14,440 feet in elevation. The 780-acre Turquoise Lake to the north of the community has eight campgrounds and two boat launches. Numerous hiking and biking trails wind in and around the community, as well as a variety of scenic drives. The community is also host to the internationally renowned Leadville 100 ultramarathon and Leadville 100 long-distance mountain bike race – champion cyclist Lance Armstrong has competed in this race in years past. A skijoring competition takes over the main drag in Leadville every March, and Ski
Cooper ski resort is 10 miles away. Copper Mountain ski resort is about 25 miles away, and numerous Leadville residents work there.

1.3.4. Berlin, New Hampshire

Berlin, New Hampshire, is a community on the edge of White Mountain National Forest along the banks of the Androscoggin River, with a population in the 2010 census of approximately 10,050. Berlin was long dependent on logging and sawmills as its primary economic drivers due to its proximity to a heavily forested area, and its location along the Androscoggin, which drops precipitously in elevation as it passes through the city. Four hydroelectric dams are located on the river in Berlin. Primary industry shifted in the early 20th century to pulp and paper mills, and the town’s population swelled to more than 20,000, though this industry is now defunct. Landmark on the Berlin skyline is the tower of the Chlor-Alkali chemical plant, which has been a Superfund site since 2005.

The facility sits on a 4.6-acre plot that was once part of a larger property, which was subdivided off into two 60-acre parcels. Mercury, dioxin, and PCBs were deposited on site and have leached into the Androscoggin River and site groundwater. The EPA has stated it will present a final remedy to the community in 2017 following public review and comment on a proposed plan to contain the toxins and prevent their release into soils and surface and groundwater. The Androscoggin in Berlin and downstream to the Maine border has been designated a mandatory “catch-and-release” fishing area because of the toxins in the water fish and birds are exposed to (EPA Region 1, n.d.)

Just across the river is the Northern Forest Heritage Park, which is operated by the Berlin Chamber of Commerce. The city has begun clearing the way for a river walk from the park that may eventually cross the river via a walking bridge and loop back around to the park. All-terrain
vehicle riders can connect to 1,000 miles of motorized trails known as “Ride the Wild,” and every year the Jericho ATV Festival expands, with more than 6,000 people in attendance in 2015 (P. Laflamme, personal communication, January 20, 2016). Hunting remains a popular area activity, as does snowmobiling. Berlin is also home to the country’s oldest ski club, Nansen, which was founded in 1872, and there are more than 185 miles of groomed trails.

1.4. Research Context

To summarize, the four communities studied by this thesis have suffered from Superfund stigma and have decided that advertising outdoor recreation is one way to engage in placemaking to attract visitors and potential residents. These towns are more than merely Superfund sites; they are communities located in beautiful areas with populations looking to grow. Community members interviewed for this thesis, as well as print promotional materials used to attract visitors and residents, will be analyzed to determine how effective marketing outdoor recreation has been for these communities to overcome stigma. The following section of this study will discuss the methods used to develop interview questions, select participants, conduct the interviews, and analyze the materials.
2. Interview Methods

The methods in this section of the study are intended to contribute to greater understanding of how Superfund-affected communities can overcome stigma by promoting outdoor recreation. To determine these methods, I created a list of interview questions and this section includes a discussion of how these questions were developed. Additionally, this section includes descriptions of how interview participants were selected and contacted, of the interviewing process, and of the transcription process. Finally, this methods section includes the goals of the interviews and a brief description of the interviews and materials analysis process, which will be discussed at length in the third chapter of this thesis.

2.1. Development of Interview Questions

This study’s questions were developed over a period of several weeks. The questions were reviewed by thesis committee members and the Montana Tech Institutional Review Board representative, and went through several iterations before being finalized.

The interview questions seek historical information about the Superfund sites selected, including broad descriptions about size, age, and make-up of these sites. Other questions ask about observed negative perception of communities, and what plan the community might have, or have had, in place to address such stigma. The questions ask about the environment and recreational amenities in or near the sites, and whether or not community members value outdoor recreation. The interview questions seek answers to whether there has been an organized effort to change the perception of the communities, and if any tangible increase in tourism has been the result of such efforts. Finally, the interview questions ask for print or digital materials the communities have developed, which will be analyzed in this study for their visual and verbal rhetorical impact.
2.2. Interview Outreach and Participant Selection

In each community, I sought interviews with current or former elected officials, government employees, or “community activists.” This study considers how a person has been a leader in improving and developing a town when identifying an interview participant as a community activist. A person who is elected or employed by the local government will have inside-knowledge of Superfund proceedings, and has a vested interest in improving the community’s economic development interests. The community activist is a person who has a deep appreciation of place and is striving to improve the community for residents and visitors.

For the Butte, Montana, interviews, I relied on my knowledge of community members and reached out to Julia Crain, special projects planner for the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department. She is the creator of the ‘Elevated’ campaign, which seeks to shift the narrative of Butte 180 degrees from the narrative that has existed and was centered on promotion of Butte’s industrial heritage. The ‘Elevated’ campaign, discussed at length later in this study, offers a rhetorical narrative of Butte in images and words that promote outdoor recreation. Former marketing campaigns have offered a rhetorical narrative of Butte that promotes mining and industrial heritage.

Secondly, Elizabeth Erickson is a co-owner of WET, an environmental engineering firm. She is also the chairperson of the Butte Natural Resource Damage Restoration Council, which has been charged by the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (a wing of the Montana Department of Justice) to allocate funds for remediation and restoration of one part of Butte’s Superfund site, Butte Area One.

Milo Manning, the former planning director for Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, provided information about Anaconda, Montana. It was during his tenure as planning director that Anaconda saw its Superfund listing. He is also the chairperson of the Silver Bow Creek
Greenway Trails authority board; this trail system will one day connect the communities of Butte, Warm Springs, Opportunity, and Anaconda, and restore to area residents a recreational opportunity that was lost more than 100 years ago to environmental degradation by mining. Secondly, Jim Davison, the Executive Director of the Anaconda Local Development Corporation, was interviewed. An Anaconda native, Davison has worked to improve Anaconda for residents and to promote the community to outsiders for many years.

For the Leadville, Colorado, interviews, I reached out to Mike Bordogna, a county commissioner and former teacher in the area schools. Several other county officials recommended him to me because of his vast knowledge of Superfund and of his intentional approach to leveraging Leadville’s recreational opportunities to the community’s advantage. Bordogna recommended I speak to Howard Tritz. Tritz worked at the Climax copper and molybdenum mine for more than 30 years, and also served as Lake County Assessor for a more than 20 years. Tritz participated in early discussions of how to shift Superfund sites into recreational sites, and was a key player in the construction of the Mineral Belt bike trail.

Finally, for the Berlin, New Hampshire, interviews, Pamela LaFlamme, who works in the Berlin Planning Department, spoke to me about her community. She was recommended by Dr. Chris Colocousis, the aforementioned professor at James Madison University with whom I have been in contact, and who worked with her for his own research in the Berlin community. LaFlamme also has extensive knowledge of the Superfund site in Berlin, and has a frontline experience in the community’s efforts to build its outdoor recreation opportunities and marketing. She pointed me in the direction of Paula Kinney, who heads up the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce, and who, as opposed to LaFlamme, had no idea there was a Superfund site in her community, but who is integral in organizing seminal community events.
like the annual Jericho ATV Festival and the RiverFire Festival. I spoke to Kinney because as executive director of the chamber she’s one of the community leaders promoting events in the community. She also was able to provide data pointing to an increase in tourism in the area in recent years.

2.3. Interview Process

The interview process was straightforward, aided by my training and background as a newspaper journalist. Prior to each interview I secured a consent form or consenting email from each participant. This form/email made each participant aware I would record our conversation. I used an app called TapeACall on my cell phone, which tapes the calls and turns the recording into an mp3 file. In addition to recording each call, I also took copious notes of each interview. The interviews took between 45 minutes and an hour and half, depending on how much the interviewee wanted to speak to each question I asked. Finally, comparing my notes to the audio file for each interview, I transcribed the interviews for accuracy.

2.4. Interview Goals

I set a number of goals for these interviews. One such goal was to gain insight into how the interviewees understand (or do not) the Superfund sites in their communities. Certain concepts were be repeated across the separate interviews, as expected. The interviewees provided descriptions of the actions their communities are taking to market recreational opportunities, which provided material to analyze the success of these approaches. Certain types of recreation were repeatedly mentioned, confirming another goal of these interviews, which was to determine which types of recreation are popular. Another goal for each interview was acquiring print or digital marketing documents from each community to demonstrate how the towns are marketing themselves both verbally and visually.
2.5. **Interview and Materials Analysis**

The following thesis chapter includes an analysis of the interviews by discussing a number of themes that arose from the individual interviews. These themes help explain how community leaders view and discuss their respective communities. Chapter 3 will include an analysis of the verbal contents of the interviews, as well as the print and digital materials these communities use to promote themselves through the lens of recreation. Analysis of the communities’ persuasive rhetoric in marketing will determine what methods appear effective.
3. Analysis

In this section, these themes, which spanned the collective body of the interviews, will be defined and discussed. Additionally these themes will be analyzed using the content of the interviews and printed promotional marketing materials to determine the rhetorical techniques leaders use to promote their communities. It should be noted this is not an exhaustive analysis of the entire contents of the interviews or the promotional materials, but rather focuses specifically on how these pieces of communication shape the perception of the communities. An assumption made for this study is that elected officials or government employees and community activists are champions for their communities, and want to help these places succeed. Thus, these themes are relevant because they indicate how members of the towns communicate about their communities. The way these leaders communicate shapes the narrative of these communities, which in turn shapes the perception people have of the towns. Twelve themes have been identified, but have been condensed to answer the two overarching questions of this study:

- Can a town overcome Superfund stigma by promoting its positive attributes and downplaying its liabilities?

- What rhetorical techniques can Superfund-affected communities use to capitalize on their history and definitive “sense of place” to attract new business, tourism and residents?

Sonja Foss notes in *Rhetorical Criticism* that when assessing a narrative, one should focus on “whether the narrative captures truths or values that are representative of the culture and whether it presents those truths and values as appealing so audiences will want to support and maintain them” (2009, p. 319). The truths and values of the communities – that is, the ways the inhabitants of these places collectively describe themselves and what aspects of this description they hold dear – have been developed over time as relevant to the inhabitants of these places.
However, the values and identities of the communities are not static, and as these towns find themselves in a state of flux, so too is the way they communicate about themselves. Their stories are changing, as are their narratives.

At its most basic, narrative can be defined as “both a way of knowing about and a way of participating in the social world” (Bochner, et al., 1997, p. 308). Humans tell stories to understand events and interactions with other people or the natural world. Sonja Foss notes that narrative is particular, shareable, and personal (2009). For a narrative to resonate with a person, the story must be detailed, and shared in a way the audience feels they can connect with and become involved in the story themselves. As James Jasinski writes in his *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*: “Narratives function constitutively when they help to shape and transform how a community understands its world and when they offer inducements to create, recreate, or transform the social world” (2001, p. 393). The narratives communities can offer visitors or potential new residents are, therefore, deeply important, because they actively create the impressions made on people by a place.

By defining themselves through story, communities shape the way outsiders will view them. The marketing communities use is persuasive rhetoric because it seeks to entice an outsider to visit the communities. The marketing gives potential visitors a narrative in which to fit themselves. The marketing narrative is effective if visitors are drawn to visiting the places and feel they are able to insert themselves into the story of place.

It is incumbent on communities to craft an attractive marketing rhetoric; this study argues that communities that use recreation marketing to create an enticing sense of place are more successful at overcoming past stigma associated with Superfund. When the story of a community
becomes one of a great place to recreate rather than a place undergoing Superfund cleanup, the community has reframed the narrative.

Creating a sense of place is not an easy task, however. Jasinski makes this observation when he writes: “Deliberative narratives typically are not closed; they remain unfinished or incomplete. Deliberative narratives culminate with the pivotal kernels – the key choices that must be made to determine how the stories will end. But in deliberative narratives, the agent of choice is usually the audience” (2001, p. 397). It is incumbent on the community to craft the narrative it desires the world to see, but how someone experiences that narrative is the unknown factor; the audience of a narrative will decide how to interpret it, whether positively or negatively. Jeffrey T. Grabill and W. Michele Simmons in their article “Toward a Critical Rhetoric of Risk Communication: Producing Citizens and the Role of Technical Communicators” write that “knowledge is not an accumulation of facts that progress toward the Truth but it is rather a collection of perceptions that are agreed upon by a discourse community” (1998, p. 424). Perception can be created, and this study argues that when community leaders and promotional documents craft deliberate narratives, perceptions can be shifted.

In her essay “Languages of place and discourses of power: constructing new senses of place,” Patricia A. Stokowski writes: “people actively create meaningful places through conversation and interaction with others… Place affiliations are sustained by rhetorical uses of language, with participants using stylistic devices such as icons, imagery, argumentation, symbols and metaphors, among others. The derived symbols of place are formalized through use into coherent language structures and appear to people as narratives, myths, fables, and the like” (2002, p. 372). Communities should be wary of allowing outsiders to define a sense of place
unaided; towns should take an active role in shaping the narrative of a place to craft and share its identity with outsiders.

The people interviewed for this study also spoke of the sense of pride they have in their community not only for the community as it exists currently, but as it existed formerly as an extraction-based place. Jasinski notes: “narratives help shape or constitute a person’s or culture’s experience of time… To a large degree, the meaning and significance of the past will be shaped by the narratives told about it” (2001, p. 399). Honoring the past iterations of a community is important because these narratives tell us where we’ve been so we can develop roadmaps for the future. “Cultures routinely face the question of what to remember about the past, and the answer is contained in the stories through which we preserve the past,” Jasinski writes. “We use narratives to understand the present, to envision possible futures, and to remember the past” (2001, p. 399). It is evident from the rhetorical analysis that follows of interviews and print marketing materials that Anaconda, Berlin, Butte, and Leadville all incorporate the narratives of their past into their rhetoric, but are also looking to the future. Berlin and Leadville are farther along in future-looking rhetoric and have the tourism numbers to back up their approaches, but as evidenced by the interviews, the communities of Anaconda and Butte are shifting their narratives to follow suit.

3.1. Overcoming Superfund Stigma

3.1.1. Creation Stories

Based on the interview content, each of the four communities is in the process of transitioning away from the identity it originally formed – a company town of hardworking people proud of their employment. Mike Bordogna of Leadville, Colorado, used the phrase “creation story” to describe how a community views itself and to describe what a community
values. The creation story Bordogna spoke of was to describe the cultural identity of a community that has been formed through its primary industrial employers, its geography, its location near recreational amenities, and the struggles it has overcome (or not).

In her environmental history *Leadville: The Struggle to Revive an American Town*, Gillian Klucas examined Leadville, Colorado’s struggle to recover from economically downtrodden, stigmatized wasteland to overcome negative perception and remediate the land in and around the community following a century of mining. Klucas noted that in Leadville, “Metals had given their families and the community an income and an identity spanning generations, and they felt comfortable – proud – to live amongst the waste and smelter piles that had made Leadville an important mining center in the nation” (2004, p. 101). The reason the communities of Leadville (and Butte, Anaconda, and Berlin) were created was to provide somewhere for miners and loggers to live. In the United States, much of our individual identities are wrapped up in our careers, so it follows that a community would feel an identity crisis if the main source of employment ceased to exist. And Bordogna’s analogy of the creation story, though spoken to specifically describe Leadville, also describes the painful transformation Butte, Anaconda, and Berlin find themselves in: These towns are in a stage of evolution. They are moving away from places established for and defined by industrial manufacturing and processing, and into new identities as natural amenity-based communities. They have reached the point where their creation stories must be recreated.

Anaconda experienced massive out-migration during the 1980s with the closure of the smelter. The population of the town peaked in 1980 at 12,518, tumbled nearly 18 percent in the decade that followed (Moffatt, 1996, p. 127), and has continued to decrease ever since. For the people who remained, pride in industrial heritage remained deeply embedded in the community’s
identity. This concept of memory and emotions woven from a heritage based in extractive industry is not unique to Anaconda. Butte also considers its mining heritage a key piece of its identity.

Julia Crain is the Special Projects Planner for the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department and creator of the “Elevated” marketing campaign. Crain is a native of Butte, though she obtained her advanced degrees out of state. As an employee of the planning department, Crain is actively involved in Superfund remediation and restoration around the community on a daily basis. Crain discussed Butte’s creation story during the interview, though not using that term. She noted that “Butte still sees the majority of its tourism based on cultural heritage, on the history of mining, genealogical research, the role of labor in industry, ethnicity.” In essence, Crain asserted that Butte’s attempts to market itself as a recreation destination have been accomplished in fits and starts. Butte’s creation story, in Crain’s words, are about its status as a melting pot of culture where people worked hard at mining and valued their ethnic heritage. She mentioned that when her mother or grandmother talk about their childhoods in Butte, they speak of taking a streetcar to the cemetery or to the Columbia Gardens, rather than hiking in the surrounding hills. Said Crain:

“Because of the industrial nature of the city, Butte necessarily had city dwellers more concerned with the goings-on of the city,” she said. “Butte’s outdoor recreation opportunities have not been readily apparent as a prized possession of our economy. There is hiking, skiing, hunting, and fishing, but many people perceive Butte as industrial. Missoula and Bozeman are the outdoor recreation destinations. We’ve been underselling the recreational opportunities available within miles of our city.”
Crain’s interview answers point to a narrative rooted in the urban experience, rather than in a recreational one. Butte citizens took their recreation in promenading around the cemetery or visiting the Columbia Gardens amusement park. Though Thompson Park, a municipal and Forest Service co-managed recreation area nine miles to the south of Butte was available to Butte residents early in the 20th century, Crain made no mention of it as a place where the members of her family recreated.

3.1.2. Trauma of Lost Industry

This transition from industrial-based identity to recreation-based identity has not been an easy one, and each of the interviewees mentioned in one way or another the trauma the communities experienced when extractive industry and the jobs it provided ended or was significantly reduced. One of the interviewees, Pamela LaFlamme, the Community Development Director at the Berlin Planning Department, spoke of a grieving process her community has gone through as it has watched the loss of its primary industry and struggled to redefine itself separate of that industry. The loss or drastic reduction of extractive industry in these communities caused a veritable hemorrhaging of jobs and significant out-migration. Consequently, each of these communities has undertaken a sort of soul-searching exercise to redefine the character of each place. LaFlamme noted how difficult it has been for Berlin to shift its mindset:

“The jobs and the wages that were paid by the mill when it was up and running were really good wages and benefits. Most people who worked there didn’t need a college degree, and many of them didn’t even have to graduate from high school. There was this, you know, you get out of the school, you start working at the mill, and you’re making a great life for yourself and for your family. Those challenges have made it hard for people to view themselves here in the community differently.”
Much of the trauma from losing the primary employer in a community is born of a pride in the career that generations of community members have shared.

3.1.3. Pride: In Community, In Industrial Heritage, In Natural Amenities

A common theme throughout the interviews was that of pride. The people who inhabit these communities are proud of where they live. They are proud of their heritage as “nation builders,” as communities that contributed to the rise of the United States as one of the world’s most powerful industrialized countries. The pride in industrial heritage reflects a pride in where a person comes from. Crain touched on this when she said, “I don’t fault the mining industry for anything – my family was made by mining.” She noted that many people in Butte share this sentiment: “Butte people are proud and strong. We hold dear our community. That toughness we perceive is to have a recognition of how deeply we feel connected to place. The way residents of the community live their lives is to do the best for this place.”

This pride in industrial heritage has been honored by the communities in this study by weaving the stories of the past into its recreation sites. These recreation sites, therefore, provide opportunities for current and future residents to enjoy the natural surroundings while simultaneously paying homage to the industry that created the community in the first place. An example is Leadville’s Mineral Belt Trail, an 11.6-mile non-motorized trail that passes through downtown Leadville and outlying areas. Howard Tritz spoke of the desire to preserve the mining district while adding a recreational amenity to the community. His memories of his relatives working in the mines were formative for him. He recalled: “My great-grandfather came here in 1879, and we’ve been connected to mining since then, my dad and my grandpa and my great-grandpa. So anyway I wanted to save the mining district. I was afraid they’d haul away the tailings, the old buildings, and what was left of the mining district.” Tritz described how the local
newspaper ran a poll of what community members would like to see as a recreational amenity in Leadville, and saving the mining district and putting in a bicycling trail received the top votes. “So we thought, let’s put a bike trail in the mining district,” Tritz said. “We put up a lot of historical signs, pictures of the mine as it was back in the day and the whole story of it. Plus we’ve got a lot of antique mining equipment scattered around the trail with any explanation of what they did.”

This trend of reusing sites for recreation once they’ve been remediated is not exclusive to one area. Butte and Anaconda are constructing the Silver Bow Creek Greenway between the two communities along former railroad lines. Butte’s Copper Mountain Park, which hosts several baseball fields and a disc golf course, is built on top of a remediated site. Berlin holds a festival called RiverFire on the boom piers left over from the pulp and paper mills.

Finally, these communities are proud of where they are located, near natural amenities such as forests, lakes, rivers, and mountains. Erickson ticked off a number of recreational opportunities within minutes of Butte:

“We definitely have hiking and biking. The ski hill is not far away. There is lots of cross-country skiing. We have blue-ribbon trout streams. There’s horseback riding, kayaking, and camping. Campgrounds are close and the national forest is close. We have a ton of those amenities and we are not well known for it. And some (Butte residents) would say they’d like to keep it that way. There are lots of climbers – there are lots of opportunities for rock climbing. There’s hang gliding off the East Ridge. Even folks from Bozeman have been coming over this way, because the East Ridge is a pretty good place to do that.”
Access to recreational amenities make these communities desirable places to live. The people who live in these towns enjoy access and are well-versed in the myriad activities available, even if outsiders aren’t aware of them.

3.1.4. Is Recreation Part of the Community’s Heritage?

A particularly penetrating insight of one of the interviews was to note that for a community to successfully rebrand itself as a recreation destination, that brand must resonate first with the members of the community. The creation story of the community must include some inkling of recreation for the redevelopment to feel not only purposeful to residents, but also for it to feel like it honors the past while moving into the future. Any redevelopment must be compatible with the community’s identity first. Redevelopment to promote tourism is a secondary benefit. This study assumes, as stated previously, that the four communities are able to take advantage of recreational opportunities because of their locations near forests, lakes, rivers, and national parks. Three of the four communities – Anaconda, Berlin, and Leadville – seemed to have a heritage of recreation deeply rooted in their identities, while in Butte that concept didn’t seem so ingrained according to the two people interviewed. For many years Butte was a bustling metropolis – “Butte, America” – finding kindred in cities Chicago and New York rather than Missoula and Bozeman.

Returning to the concept of a community’s “creation story,” developing a new identity built upon an amenity-based economy rather than an extraction-based one, and identifying what a community values for its residents will make redevelopment a less-fraught process. Stokowski notes that “attentiveness to a town’s ‘sacred structure’ – defined as the most highly valued places in a community’s common landscape – could produce a better plan for tourism design and development… Understanding the role of these settings in forming a communal sense of place
protected both community and individual identity – and reduced the political maneuvering often associated with tourism development” (2002, p. 378-379). In short, the communities that already deeply value outdoor recreation as a critical part of their communal identity will have an easier time of developing a new economy based on recreation than will communities that don’t have the same historic stance toward recreation.

3.1.5. Resentment and Distrust

Pride in community may likely contribute to resentment and distrust of the government and remediation projects. Interviewees from Anaconda, Butte, and Leadville noted that these communities and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) make uncomfortable bedfellows. These feelings of resentment and distrust come from a perceived judgment of the communities as dirty places with dirty people, and from the feeling that the EPA (or sometimes, the Responsible Party) is dodging a proper cleanup. Bordogna spoke of this perception when he said:

“I think when the federal government stepped in and named all of residential Leadville as a Superfund site, especially after everybody just lost their jobs, it was viewed as a pretty strong affront. I think a lot of folks viewed it as a value judgment, that the government was telling them that they are poisoning their children, that they must have grown up with lead poisoning, i.e., you’re not as smart as we are because you must have brain damage from living in this horrible wasteland.”

The people of Leadville felt from the beginning that the perception the EPA and outsiders had of their community was inaccurate, and felt insulted that they had to justify their employment decisions and how they raised their children. This made the relationship between the town and the government agency tenuous from the outset.
The resentment and distrust hasn’t been solely directed at the EPA, however. In Anaconda, the city-county was initially hesitant to be party to the EPA’s requirement that BP-Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARCO), which had in 1977 purchased the Anaconda Company, begin remediation. “The community was more in shock from losing its major employer than looking at Superfund,” Jim Davison said. “Even when the natural resource lawsuit came in, there was a real controversy in the community of not wanting to hurt the company, even though the company had left the community.” Even when it became apparent the amount of damage to the natural resources around Anaconda and the sheer cost of cleanup, loyalty to the Anaconda Company persisted for many years.

However, the community’s loyalty to the company is coming back to haunt it. Davison specifically used the word ‘mistake’ to describe the town’s lingering loyalties. And unfortunately, as Davison mentioned, ARCO is reconsidering promises made to the community years ago:

“We’ve seen ARCO pull back from what their promises were 25-30 years ago. A lot of their cleanup was to recreational standards. We had a vision that visitors would be able to access some of these areas, be it by controlled access, via a bus to get to the stack viewing stand site so people could see that, or with other people being able to hike or take trails for bicycles or to be on the ponds, or horseback riding, we’ve seen that certainly pulled back from ARCO in the last five years. They don’t want any access. They had promised us at the time not only access and rights of way, but actually to build trails around the community. But that seems completely off the radar right now, and in fact actively not supporting that effort.”
Davison’s interview made clear that the people of Anaconda feel they have upheld their end of the bargain by allowing ARCO to perform remediation to recreational standards rather than residential standards. Anaconda residents are frustrated that ARCO isn’t keeping its promises.

Recreational standards requires less remediation than a cleanup to residential standards. Davison said that the community allowed ARCO to clean up to less exacting standards because of the company’s assurances that it would provide recreational amenities for the community. The company’s about-face has soured the relationship and reveals a shift from allegiance to distrust in the company by community members. Frustrations are exacerbated by ARCO’s request for a gag order on Superfund proceedings with the county, which was granted. The veil that has been pulled over the proceedings has forced community members to look for other ways to establish the recreational amenities it had in mind 30 years ago, such as a trail from Whitehall to Philipsburg. Davison’s interview made it apparent that people in the community are changing the way they talk about ARCO; old loyalties are disappearing and the community is looking for ways to move forward despite ARCO’s involvement, rather than trying to work together on the cleanup. “So as we prod from the outside on people in the negotiations, we get hints on what’s happening, and we get hints also from EPA we have to find other ways to get this access,” Davison said. The community of Anaconda sees its way forward in promoting outdoor recreation, but finds itself blocked by an unwilling responsible party. This lack of collaboration unfortunately finds precedent in Leadville, Colorado, where for decades the community, ASARCO, and the EPA were triangulated at loggerheads, unable to agree how to proceed. For Leadville, distrust of the EPA was a hugely limiting factor in the success of cleanup for decades, a point reiterated in the analysis of an interview later in this section.
In Butte and Anaconda, distrust of the EPA runs rampant, but it is now frequently coupled with distrust of BP-ARCO for reneging on its promises. These communities, met by an unmoving wall of bureaucracy, face continued economic difficulties and continued stigma. This disintegration of trust finds its roots in a failure of communication. Grabill and Simmons examined how risk was communicated to residents of contaminated sites and noted that disallowing the public to participate in the decision-making process inevitably leads to distrust and resentment. “As disputes about risk are characterized by interactions between interests more and less powerful, the failure to account for power in decision making about the meaning of risk — a failure of both technocratic and negotiated approaches — can lead to the ‘oppression’ of (typically citizen) audiences” (1998, p. 423). Just as EPA has been criticized for its “decide-announce-defend” policies in decision making without allowing the public a seat at the table, the Anaconda community has wearied of ARCO dragging its feet on cleanup, or worse, deciding without community input how to proceed to prevent possible liability issues. Consequently, as evidenced by Davison’s interview, the townsfolk are looking for alternative ways to build desired recreational amenities, circumventing ARCO as much as possible.

3.1.6. Stigma and the Results of Stigma

Feelings of stigmatization because of the Superfund label has affected the communities in different ways. Some of the interviewees felt that stigma of the community is associated more closely with the economic repercussions of loss of extractive industry, while other interviewees felt that stigma of the community has been more associated with the environmental damage. Davison noted, “People would come in, roll down their window, get their gas and leave town because they (thought they) were going to glow.” Additionally, it became apparent during review of the interviews that stigma associated with Superfund remediation can be broken into two
types: Stigma that prevents business redevelopment and stigma that prevents tourism. Davison highlighted the former when he said:

“The waste in place, you know, the ‘solution is pollution’ will have long-term effects on the community. There have been other areas that would have been good for industrial redevelopment, where waste has been left in place, which has actually hurt us in redeveloping. I’ve been working with a firm for over two years to have them build a $158 million facility. The investor going along with it finally physically showed up on the site and he said he wasn’t going to build on an old Superfund site, and we lost it. We’ve been fighting this for well over 30 years. Even other mining industries have looked at developing here, but because of the stigma of Superfund won’t do it.”

Anaconda’s experience is a prime example of how the presence of a Superfund cleanup affects a community’s ability to redevelop economically. Howard Tritz mentioned this concept when he spoke about the early years of Leadville’s Superfund listing: “People were afraid to come to Leadville. Some of the people out of Denver, from the state appraisal office, would come up to monitor what we were doing. They wouldn’t drink the water in the cafes. They were afraid of it.”

Stigma that prevents tourism has been evident in other communities that are included in this study. LaFlamme spoke of how Berlin has struggled to overcome the perception that because there were once mills there that emitted a sulfurous odor, that odor still exists even though the mills are long shuttered: “Getting people to perceive Berlin differently outside is really tricky. One, there are still people who think it’s a smelly mill town. Or two, they feel really sad for us because the smelly mill town is gone and they have nothing to replace it.”
These sources of stigma are finally fading; several of the people interviewed noted that even if the shift has been inadvertent, perceptions of their communities are changing now that enough time has passed.

### 3.2. Shifting Identities

#### 3.2.1. Transitioning Economies

As time wears on, these communities are in transition. They are in the process of reinventing their economic drivers. Previously their place identities were firmly rooted in extractive industry and industrialization. However, these economies are now evolving into natural amenity-based. This transition has been dubbed in some literature as the transition from “Old West” to “New West” (whether or not the community is located in the American West). Once a community’s narrative becomes disentangled from its industrial heritage, because the younger generations in the community had nothing to do with that past, the evolution of the community’s identity becomes a much smoother process. A point Davison made in his interview agrees with this assessment:

“We’ve got a group that we get together every Monday called Accelerate Anaconda talking about branding materials and working with the Chamber to do a new billboard out on the Interstate. The interesting thing, people want to tag the thing ‘Discover Anaconda,’ but more so they don’t want the stack in the picture. Eliminate the stack, eliminate the image. People my age and older remember smoke coming out of the stack. Most of the people that are working on this stuff now either didn’t live here at the time or weren’t born when the stack ran. They’re closing that historic connection.”
Davison has realized that the narrative his community is creating has become unmoored from its attachment to extractive industry because the youth and new residents don’t have a personal connection to the smelter or the Anaconda Company. Just as the people of Leadville had to come to terms with lost industry, so too have the people of Anaconda. In “eliminating” the image of the Washoe smelter stack from its marketing imagery, Anaconda is moving toward a new chapter of its story, which is also evident from its ‘Discover Anaconda’ tourism brochure. The brochure, pictured here, shows images that do not refer at all to Anaconda’s industrial past. The main image is of the lovely Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Courthouse with fall foliage surrounding it, which brings up nostalgic feelings of small town Americana. The other three images all depict various forms of recreation: golfing, camping, skiing. The logo on the bottom right of the brochure is for the Building Active Anaconda Team, which refers to an initiative that helps community members exercise and get outside. The only reference to the smelter stack is on the logo on the bottom left, and it’s actually quite difficult to see – a person would have scour the brochure to notice it. Additionally, the brochure itself is a collection of six maps depicting trails in and or near the community, and a map of the downtown with businesses and stores labeled, as well as events and

Figure 1: “Discover Anaconda” promotional booklet
places of interest. “Trails and Tourism” is the title of the brochure, words that clearly link Anaconda to its amenities-rich surroundings.

More than 30 years after the closure of the Washoe smelter, it’s apparent the smelter is closed for good. “For years people thought the smelter would come back,” Davison observed. “People have to look at different ways to make the community grow and thrive. We’re in the middle of this beautiful area, and one, as citizens we have to take advantage of it, and two, it’s a resource to invite people to bring more industry or to invite people to visit and create a visitor industry.” Anaconda has begun its transformation from smelting town to picturesque mountain town.

3.2.2. The Spirit of Collaboration
Redefining the identities and economies of the four communities has been streamlined when a spirit of collaboration is apparent between community members and EPA project managers to work through the cleanup as quickly as possible. The communities that are more successful in using the strategy of recreation are those where the interviewees spoke of cooperation rather than antagonism. Bordogna noted, “In 25 years of fighting we got two areas taken off Superfund. In seven years of working together we have delisted 50 percent of the entire area.” LaFlamme spoke of the cooperation between Georgia Pacific, the owner of the contaminated mill in Berlin, and the EPA to remediate the site; EPA has been receptive to what the community feels is the “highest and best use” for the remediated site. Unfortunately, in Butte and Anaconda, the continued distrust and resentment between the communities, the responsible parties, and the EPA have slowed the redevelopment process significantly.

But the spirit of collaboration extends into the members of the community themselves. The communities that threw their energy behind a specific vision of redevelopment have, as
evidenced by the interviews, had greater success in redeveloping faster. A community largely unified on the future it wants to build is more readily able to reach that destination than a community divided. For example, Berlin has seen rapid growth in its Jericho ATV Festival. LaFlamme said: “In 2013 there were 2,000 visitors. In 2014 there were a little over 4,000 visitors, and last summer in 2015, had just about 6,000 visitors for the event.” Butte hopes to continue its momentum with the festivals it hosts – the Montana Folk Festival, Evel Knievel Days, and An Ri Ra – and that these mega-events will build its economy. Crain said:

“Since the advent of the Montana Folk Festival, there is a much more rich offering of cultural opportunities. They’re now seeing mining heritage reimagined. The areas of the sites of extraction are now the sites of cultural infusion. The very nature of the Folk Festival turned the perception of the community into something bigger and broader. We’ve reimagined what we have in the community.”

Here Crain demonstrates how Butte’s narrative is shifting. But this shift includes past iterations of the community’s story. In saying “mining heritage reimagined,” Crain establishes how Butte’s narrative includes the story of its past but in a way that is appealing to the present. It’s a story that visitors to the community can fit themselves into. “Sites of extraction are now sites of cultural infusion” shows how past narrative can be incorporated into present narrative. The narrative, as evidenced by Crain, is changing perceptions of Butte. Butte is no longer just a mining town; the present narrative has expanded the meaning of Butte. The Montana Folk Festival’s main stage is underneath the Original Mine Yard headframe, and one of the largest annual donations to the festival comes from the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation; the Washington Companies owns Montana Resources, which operates the open-pit mine in Butte. In
Butte, the relationship between the community’s mining heritage is slowly expanding to include recreation as a foundation of its identity.

### 3.2.3. Economic Development and Diversification

This reinvention seems critically based on diversification; it seems these communities are learning from the past and are avoiding the trap of one economic driver. Several of the interviewees mentioned that their communities are planning for a future without any extractive industry at all, and for a reduced tax base even with increasing tourism. Bordogna noted:

“We’ve been putting over 100 grand a year into our economic development corp. From the county, because we know when the mine closes the next time, we damn well better have a secondary tax base. Even though recreation and tourism are often talked about, they equate to a much, much smaller portion of our economic impact.”

The interviews confirm that outdoor recreation is one component of a bigger picture, rather than the sole solution for economic redevelopment. These towns hope to avoid the “resource curse” as noted by Winkler, et al. in “Boom or Bust? Population Dynamics in Natural Resource-Dependent Counties.” The authors note, “Community problems associated with natural resource dependence (particularly mining) are so great that scholars refer to the ‘resource curse’ of places rich in natural resources, but with poor economies, poverty, and social problems” (2012, p. 352). Relying too heavily on one particular industry to carry a community is a risky proposition, though so many places around the globe are affected by this situation. A modern-day example is Colstrip, Montana, which faces an uncertain future in the face of drastic carbon emissions cuts and the impending closure of the coal-fired power plants to meet new standards.

LaFlamme spoke of the effort to transition away from an economy defined by a lone employer as a process of changing the identity of the community, too:
“In 2001 when the mills closed for the first time, there was a whole lot of effort to change many things about the community. One, how we viewed ourselves and how others viewed us in terms of economy. Rather than relying on solely one form of economic driver, which at that point was the manufacture of pulp and paper, starting to talk about economic diversity. There were lots of efforts once the mills closed again for the second time in 2006 to really start a more concerted effort for how we thought about ourselves and saw ourselves.”

Industry closure forced Berlin’s populace to think of itself in a different way, and to actively engage in placemaking to determine its future identity. Diversifying the economy, though a slow process, sets up Berlin for redevelopment that is less susceptible to over-night failure.

### 3.2.4. Natural Amenities as Attractors to the Community

Part of the redevelopment in these towns is the remediation and restoration of the damaged natural resources. For some of these communities this effort has been more successful than in others. In Leadville, the community’s drinking water source was not damaged by mining activities. Bordogna stated that “you would never in million years be able to tell there was contamination there to start with.” However, that isn’t true of other communities, which are still working through remediation toward restoration. Davison said in his community, “I don’t think delisting is anywhere on the horizon.” An unknown delisting date stems in part from resources that have been damaged irreparably. Some of Butte and Anaconda’s aquifers are compromised beyond repair because of mine waste seeping into groundwater, although the communities now pull their water from local reservoirs and rivers. In Berlin, residents are unlikely to ever be able to fish the stretch of the Androscoggin River that passes through town – though those people are able to fish the river upstream of Berlin. Additionally, the willingness of the EPA and the
Responsible Party to carry through remediation and restoration promises is a significant factor in how “clean” these places become. In Anaconda, where the Responsible Party, ARCO appears to grow increasingly worried about waste caps being disturbed, causing it to retract promises of recreational opportunities on top of the caps.

But as noted previously in this thesis, inevitably that someday these places will by necessity be restored to support the growing American population. Recreational amenities on top of remediated sites has been a viable option. Amenity-rich communities like Anaconda, Berlin, Butte, and Leadville are once again beginning to experience in-migration of people who are attracted to their proximity to national forest, rivers, lakes, and mountains, which will be quantified in the following section of this thesis.

In-migration to amenity-rich communities, as discussed earlier, is not new, but it is growing. Mentioned in the first chapter of this study, the single most important factor for a business to relocate to a community is the quality of life (Community Builders, 2015, p. 10). In Anaconda, Davison said, “There are people who want to be able to walk out of their back door into nature. We’ve certainly see that happen. Twenty-five years ago we didn’t have an engineering office in town. We have four now. A lot of the reason they’re here, they can attract employees, young engineers that want to live in the area.” As the Community Builders report noted, access to outdoor recreation and open space are the primary drivers for people to relocate, and businesses are learning to capitalize on their location to attract top people.

In Butte, Erickson noted a similar observation with her own business’s ability to recruit talented employees because of local recreational opportunities. This commiserates with the observation: “Some rural communities have increasingly subscribed to a new regime of rural natural resource dependence whereby the scenic and recreational values of natural resources fuel
the economy” (Winkler et al., 2012, p. 352). The pull of this “rural idyll” is what attracts people to areas, which several of the interviews for this study confirmed.

So too has this phenomenon been observed in Leadville. Tritz said:

“All of sudden you see a lot of new young people coming into town. You get to know them, being in the assessor’s office, and you find out these people have masters, PhDs, bachelors, they’re educated people, and they’re young, in their 20s, 30s, and they have young families, and they’re working at cheap jobs, they’re not making much money, but they’re here for the mountains. We’ve got a lot of 14,000-foot peaks right here. They’re here for the 14ers, for the clear clean air, the clean water, and for all the recreation, and a good place to raise their kids.”

The pages from the Leadville official visitor guide demonstrates that the beauty of the natural surroundings and the myriad recreational activities are a huge draw to the area, and the list of activities continues. In the guide, there are several pages also devoted...
to the area’s mining heritage, but they are secondary to the numerous landscape and recreational activity photos; the vast majority of the guide is concerned with all things outdoors. The use of short action verbs and icons also quickly conveys to someone flipping through the guide the breadth of activities in the Leadville area.

3.3. Rhetorical Techniques

3.3.1. Changing Perceptions

In all of these communities, another common theme among the interviews was the erasure of visual reminders of environmental degradation. The combined forces of the rural idyll and the vanishing reminders of environmental degradation play heavily into erasing perceptions of these communities as contaminated places. These towns need not bury the past entirely, because pride in industrial heritage is an important facet of these communities, but rather should promote outdoor recreation opportunities without mentioning Superfund. Interestingly, while Anaconda seems to be moving away from using images of the Washoe stack entirely, Butte actively incorporates its symbol of industry – the headframe – into its marketing materials. It does not, however, incorporate the Berkeley Pit as it used to as recently as 2014.

The “Elevated” campaign is the Butte-Silver Bow Community Development Department’s attempt to shift Butte’s narrative dramatically, by using images and language to tell a vastly different story of the community than has been told for generations. It is an effort to not only change Butte’s narrative in the mind of Butte and Montana citizens, but in the minds of tourists who visit the community as well. Crain discussed the county’s intentions for the poster in a December 3, 2015, email:

“The ‘Elevated’ campaign is an effort to illustrate the lifestyle and opportunities available to residents and visitors in Butte, Montana. There were so many photos depicting
experiences that are singular and only found in our community. In so many of them, people were ascending, smiled, thrilled to be experiencing the everyday in Butte. I wanted to show Montana and the world that Butte is more than they expect. Butte’s reputation as a rough and tumble mining town isn’t relevant like it was in the mid-20th century. I wanted to move past the nostalgic phrases we use to describe our city and create a concept that inspires us to think forward and imagine how we can elevate what is into what can be.”

Conceptualizing Butte’s new story to include recreation against the backdrop of the town’s history will shift the community’s identity. Up against so many years of the chronicle of industrial heritage, the new narrative of the “Elevated” campaign is likely to take some time to gain traction in the community, state, and in the minds of tourists. However, it is a first step toward reframing the story of Butte.

Perception shifts also include educating visitors to the community about the healthy nature of the place. Bordogna, in reference to the blood lead testing Leadville does to prevent heavy metals exposure, said: “Our visitors want to know, ‘Can I drink the water here? Can my

Figure 3: Butte’s “Elevated” marketing campaign poster
kids crawl on the ground? Is it safe? Is there lead? Chunks of arsenic?’ I think the other way of going to a research-based, data-based program that our blood lead program is, has helped. And we can also tell visitors with a straight face we have remediated these things.” Shifting identities has been uphill battle in some of these communities, and the struggle isn’t over yet, but in each of the communities it is apparent perceptions are changing.

3.3.2. Marketing Recreation and Amenities

Finally, marketing the recreation and amenities in an area recovering from Superfund stigma is an important question of communication. Marketing these amenities gives these communities the space to tell a different story and create a different identity. The marketing materials are one way of communicating to visitors and potential new residents the new story of a place. Leadville’s brand campaign, “become a genuine: (ěl-ě-vacationer),” is included in its official visitor guide. The use of the word “genuine” is in sync with Leadville’s identity as a genuine historic mining town. And its elevation at 10,000 feet above sea level is a point of pride it brings to the forefront with the play on the words “elevation” and “vacation”. Leadville’s rhetorical marketing technique consists of honoring its heritage but moving into the future with its new identity as an affordable outdoor recreation capital.
Berlin has released a new branding campaign called “Your Adventure Starts Here” that is in step with New Hampshire’s brand campaign for Coos County called “Ride the Wilds”. While lighting on fire the boom piers left over from the pulp mills is a nod to Berlin’s industrial past, Berlin’s marketing rhetoric is focused more on the “wild” adventures a person can have in and around the community, specifically centered around ATVing. The community has, perhaps more than the others, sought to completely reinvent itself.

“Discover Anaconda” is focusing on recreational tourism rather than industrial tourism. As Davison said, Anaconda’s rhetorical marketing technique is to look beyond its industrial heritage for ways to grow and thrive. The community views its natural amenities as a new resource to attract visitors and potential residents to the community.

Butte’s “Elevated” marketing campaign incorporates recreation, as does a campaign by the Butte Convention and Visitors Bureau to market Butte as a recreation destination in national
magazines. On a more grassroots level, #rethinkbutte combines recreation, entertainment, and mining heritage with a local non-profit radio station’s community member interviews.

Crain’s “mining heritage reimagined,” establishes how Butte’s narrative includes the story of its past but in a way that is appealing to the present. It’s a story that visitors to the community can fit themselves into. “Sites of extraction are now sites of cultural infusion” shows how past narrative can be incorporated into present narrative. The narrative, as evidenced by Crain, is changing perceptions of Butte. Butte is no longer *just* a mining town; the present narrative has expanded the meaning of Butte. Crain said:

“We need to find the resources to promote the natural history, the genealogical history, the national forest, the waterways. Our stories are much more dynamic than mining and smelting. The natural resources, the wilderness, the open spaces – they are key to keeping people here today.”

Crain demonstrates how promoting the area’s natural resources are vital to Butte’s future success as a community because they attract people to Butte, and more importantly, entice them to stay. Crain’s narrative technique of broadening, rather than completely changing, the chronicle of Butte is an example of how a community leader’s rhetoric can add to perception changes. Stokowski notes that “people actively create meaningful places through conversation and interaction with others” (2002, p. 372). Crain’s sense of place, and her technique of broadening the narrative, have had an effect on the community.

Each of these marketing campaigns focuses on the positive aspects of these communities by telling a story of the ideal outdoor recreation destination. In the final section of this study, the effectiveness of these rhetorical techniques will be discussed in the context of increased tourism numbers, which are framed quantitatively and qualitatively.
4. Conclusion

4.1. Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis set out to answer a number of questions:

- Can a town overcome Superfund stigma by promoting its positive attributes and downplaying its liabilities?
- What rhetorical techniques can Superfund-affected communities use to capitalize on their history and definitive “sense of place” to attract new business, tourism and residents?

The conclusion this thesis has reached is that it is possible to overcome stigma by promoting outdoor recreation opportunities in a community. The interviews and marketing materials point to four communities that are recovering from tarnished images following a Superfund listing and cleanup that have found marketing outdoor recreation to be an effective way to move forward. In Leadville, Mike Bordogna observed: “Tourism continues to be on a near-exponential increase every year. We’re being discovered. We’ve done a much better job of marketing ourselves and tourism is increasing.” He said that 60 percent of the homes sold in Lake County, Colorado, last year were to second-home owners. Most importantly, he noted that Leadville feels like a place where the American Dream is achievable: “We feel like we’re advancing in life, not just treading water. I think it’s the kind of opportunity most people want, if not all.”

These communities have realized that marketing the natural amenities in and around the communities is more effective than marketing their industrial heritage. In all of the promotional materials analyzed, the focus was on outdoor recreation, with heritage tourism an important secondary component. And while historic preservation plans have launched recreational amenity
opportunities for all of the communities, recreation has become the key. Observed Milo Manning in Anaconda:

“We really don’t have a large tax base. We don’t have a lot of employment opportunities. I think the recreation… brings a lot of people in. A lot of areas on company land were used for hunting and fishing. They could go up, they didn’t have to ask for permission, they just did it. It’s always been a recreational area because all the land was quasi-public even if it wasn’t.”

For generations of Anaconda residents, access to land for recreational purposes has been a value of the community. Continuing this tradition gives Anaconda a different way to promote itself to potential residents and tourists, increasing the tax base.

Correlations between increased tourism numbers and the marketing efforts undertaken by the communities are apparent in all four places. Anaconda’s technique of looking beyond its industrial heritage for ways to grow and thrive, as Jim Davison noted, seems to be related to increased bed tax dollars year-round. Davison also shared the story of Pete Kurtz, the long-time bike and ski shop owner, who has had record years recently for bicycle and ski tune-ups. Kurtz’s success also appears correlated to recent marketing efforts. Anaconda’s Chamber of Commerce is in a period of transition to a new executive director, and so I turned to the University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research website 2015 interactive data to quantify the correlations. Using the interactive data, which was compiled from statewide nonresident visitor surveys, I was able to examine the main reasons the 26 ITRR respondent (who spent at least one night in the community) replies for why they visited Anaconda. The number of nonresident visitors who took completed the survey was not available on the website, but the interactive data portal did note that this sample size is quite small.
According to the data, of the several dozen activities visitors were asked if they engaged in, the top five activities while in Montana were scenic driving (50%), day hiking (47%), car/RV camping (43%), visiting other historical sites (42%), and wildlife watching (31%). In 2014, 19 respondents (who spent at least one night in the community) replied to the ITRR survey and their top five activities were scenic driving (66%), day hiking (46%), car/RV camping (42%), nature photography (33%), and visiting museums (31%). And in 2013, 19 respondents (who spent at least one night in the community) replied to the ITRR survey, and their top five activities were scenic driving (75%), day hiking (59%), car/RV camping (59%), nature photography (57%), and wildlife watching (54%). While the survey respondents’ replies, coupled with staying at least one night in Anaconda, suggest outdoor recreation was the main reason for their stay, though respondents may have engaged in these activities in other parts of the state, too.

In Berlin, the community’s reinvention of itself as the place where adventure begins has resulted in quantifiable increases in tourism. Paula Kinney, the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said she’s started using Google and Facebook Analytics to track increases in tourism. “I’ll show you my marketing plan and the recent analytics,” she said. “And it’s working because the places we marketed in, the people are coming. That’s how we know it’s working.” Kinney’s Google Analytics show that during the major events in the community – the Jericho ATV and RiverFire festivals – there are huge spikes in Facebook “check-ins” from mobile devices with out-of-state or out-of-county area codes or prefixes. In July 2015, Kinney’s Google Analytics showed that 15,692 unique visitors went to the community’s event websites (an increase from June’s 8,518 visits), with the majority of the traffic coming from Boston, Massachusetts; Berlin, New Hampshire; New York, New York; Manchester, New Hampshire; Concord, New Hampshire; Portland, Maine; New Haven, Connecticut; and Nashua, New
Hampshire. During that month the top website searches were: “Jericho ATV Festival, /, Calendar, Trail info, stay, member directory, riverfire, JATV parking, real estate”. In October, the month when Berlin holds RiverFire, 10,575 people visited Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce-associated websites, an increase from 7,594 in September, with most of the searches related to RiverFire. Plymouth State University in Plymouth, New Hampshire, has issued for several years the North Country Economic Index, which tracks the performance of the tourism business in Coos County, where Berlin is located. In 2015, the report noted that county-wide, the rooms and meals tax collected from county businesses was the largest for autumn in a decade. The number of visitors to the county was the highest since 2007 (Lee, 2016, para. 1).

In Butte, the technique of broadening, rather than completely changing, the chronicle of Butte appears to be effective based on the Montana Folk Festival’s annual attendance rate, which has held steady at roughly 150,000 each year since 2009. The festival takes place in historic Uptown Butte, with the main stage in the Original Mine Yard, which has been remediated and repurposed into a city park. When the festival was the National Folk Festival for three years between 2009 and 2011 (prior to morphing into the Montana Folk Festival when the National moved on to the next city), the free outdoor festival brought in $20 million for businesses in 2009 and in 2011 $31 million, with an estimated 165,000 visitors in attendance (montanafolkfestival.com). According to an ITRR survey conducted at the Montana Folk Festival in 2015, of the 371 valid responses, 25 percent of responses were from people who live out of the state or the country, and of all Montana responses (75 percent of those surveyed), 46 percent of responses were from people who live outside of Silver Bow County. The total reported expenditures (restaurants, lodging, gasoline, retail goods, entertainment/recreation, etc.) by those 371 respondents during the festival was $53,281, and the mean number of nights spent
in the county was 2.81. This data can be extrapolated to mean that if 371 people are infusing $53,281 into Butte’s economy during one weekend in the summer, the collective number of people coming to the community for all three festivals are pumping significant recreation dollars into the local economy. These dollars are diversifying Butte’s economy and support this study’s proposition that marketing outdoor recreation is changing the way Superfund-affected communities are perceived. People from all over the world now look forward to visiting Butte for a recreational event, a foreign concept just 15 years ago.

The Butte 100 mountain bike race is another example of a recreational activity in Butte that has grown rapidly since its inception. The race claims to be the toughest mountain bike race in the nation, with more than 16,000 feet climbed. The race began in 2007, and in recent years race organizers have had to institute a lottery to determine race participants. Prior to instituting the lottery, the 350 total participant slots (limited by the race’s Forest Service permit) sold out in seconds.

The community’s residential population has held steady for about five years after three decades of decline; the jobs hemorrhage has ended and the city’s population may finally begin to increase once again. A call to the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce requesting tourism statistics to the region resulted in being redirected to The University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research website. Using the ITRR’s 2015 interactive data, I was able to examine the main reasons the 174 ITRR non-resident survey respondents (who spent at least one night in the community) replies for why they visited Butte. According to the data, of the several dozen activities visitors were asked if they engaged in, the top five activities while in Montana were scenic driving (68%), nature photography (35%), day hiking (31%), wildlife watching (28%), and visiting other historical sites (26%). In 2014, 155 ITRR respondents (who spent at
least one night in the community) replied to the survey and their top five activities were scenic driving (78%), day hiking (35%), visiting other historical sites (32%), recreational shopping (29%), and wildlife watching (29%). In 2013, 117 ITRR respondents (who spent at least one night in the community) replied to the survey and their top five activities while in Montana were scenic driving (60%), nature photography (39%), wildlife watching (30%), car/RV camping (27%), and recreational shopping (25%). While the survey respondents’ replies, coupled with staying at least one night in Butte, suggest outdoor recreation was the main reason for their stay, it’s possible the respondents engaged in these activities in other parts of the state, too.

Finally, in Leadville, the technique of honoring its heritage but moving into the future with its new identity as an affordable outdoor recreation capital can be quantified with Bordogna’s evidence about the success of the Leadville Trail 100, which is the second-oldest 100-mile footrace in the United States, and which was founded by a former Climax mine employee. Attendance of the race has grown from roughly 45 racers in 1983 to more than 700 runners in 2015 that were determined by lottery because so many people seek to enter the race (which is now owned by Lifetime Fitness and sponsored by New Balance shoe company). Cara Russell, the Leadville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director said in an email March 31, 2016: “Leadville reinvented itself as a top heritage tourism destination. It did fairly well in that regard, and then the race series started, then the race series got really successful, and then there became a bit of a power struggle for branding between heritage and outdoor rec. The economic pull of the outdoor rec industry is undeniable. But for a mountain town with a narrow weather window for tourism, fighting for space/lodging/attention is a real issue.” For Leadville, marketing its outdoor recreation opportunities while paying homage to its mining roots has been its recipe for success.
To conclude, each of these four communities is poised for growth in outdoor recreation in the coming years. Increased marketing of outdoor recreation opportunities in-state and out-of-state, plus better tracking methods, will provide quantifiable evidence that this approach is helping these communities move past their former status as Superfund cities and into a new era as high-amenity recreation destinations. More research is needed on this topic, but within the scope of this study, all signs point to outdoor recreation as a viable way to overcome Superfund stigma.

4.2. Limitations of the Study

Although this thesis does provide data in support of the marketing of outdoor recreation in high-amenity areas as a method to overcome Superfund stigma, I must note concerns encountered in the process of coming to this conclusion.

4.2.1. Limitations of the Interview Process

I chose to interview eight people in four communities for this thesis. These people were selected because they are current or former elected officials, government employees, or community activists. These people are leaders in their respective communities, and therefore are able to make qualified statements about their towns. However, I must acknowledge that the opinions of two people are not representative of an entire community. They are a highly qualified sample, but a sample nonetheless. Interviewing every single member of an entire community was for the scope of this thesis an untenable task.

4.2.2. Limitations of Interview Analysis

I must acknowledge that during the analysis of these interviews I brought my own bias and research background to the task. The themes I assigned to the interviews, while universal to all of the interviews, were devised by me. Interview transcripts are included in Appendix F,
should a reader of this document wish to analyze the interviews for him or herself. Additionally, it’s impossible to control the mindset and environment of the people interviewed. Unknown factors may have caused response biases, and must be taken into account when analyzing the results of the interviews. Finally, analyzing each interview word by word or line by line was impossible given the time constraints of this project, so the quotations used from the interviews are a representative sample of the interview content as a whole.

4.2.3. Limited Quantitative Data

Another limitation of this study was the lack of exact quantifiable tourism numbers in all of the communities. None of the communities track their tourism numbers the same way. With the exception of Berlin, New Hampshire, the other three communities don’t appear to use Google or Facebook Analytics to track their tourism numbers, or break out their tourism numbers by type of activity. Sample sizes for quantitative data tended to be small, such as the information used from the University of Montana Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research. Therefore, the statistics used in the discussion are those relevant to this study’s scope, but are not exhaustive.
References Cited


Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Waiver Letter

To: Kelley Christensen & Karen Sorensen  
From: Scott Risser  
Date: 12/7/15  
Re: Human Subjects Research

Upon preliminary review of Ms. Christensen’s proposed research it is my opinion that this project will not require IRB oversight. The following parameters were used in this decision:

1. The proposed project involves quality or process improvement intentions, and does not explicitly examine individuals.
2. The data collected concern specific superfund sites, and are not generalizable beyond these sites.

If any of these parameters change during the course of this project, Ms. Christensen will contact a member of the UM IRB and immediately cease data collection until a human subjects determination can be made.

Please contact me with further questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Risser, PhD  
Montana Tech
Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
   - If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
   - If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?

5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?

8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?
   - What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   - Is there a document I could have a copy of?
9. Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?

10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
   - Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
   - May I have a copy of these materials?
   - How were these materials developed?
   - How were these materials distributed?

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?

13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?
Appendix C: Consent Forms

Christensen, Kelley

From: Mike Bordogna <mbordogna@co.lake.co.us>
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 10:04 AM
To: Christensen, Kelley
Subject: RE: Montana Tech grad student would like to interview about Leadville outdoor recreation promotion to overcome Superfund stigma

Hi Kelly, I'll call you in a minute. Yes, I agree to the consent form, Mike

From: Christensen, Kelley [mailto:kchristensen@mttech.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:46 PM
To: Mike Bordogna
Subject: RE: Montana Tech grad student would like to interview about Leadville outdoor recreation promotion to overcome Superfund stigma

Mike,

Monday at 10 a.m. works great for me, so let's plan on doing the interview then.

I've attached the questions I will be asking you so you have some time to mull over them in advance of our conversation. I've also attached the consent form I'll need you to sign to acknowledge you are aware the conversation will be recorded. Could you please sign and email that back to me prior to Monday?

The number I'll be calling from is 406-490-0439.

Thank you very much!
Kelley

From: Mike Bordogna [mailto:mbordogna@co.lake.co.us]
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 1:36 PM
To: Christensen, Kelley
Subject: RE: Montana Tech grad student would like to interview about Leadville outdoor recreation promotion to overcome Superfund stigma

Thanks Kelly,
I may, what time are you thinking and for how long? Alternately, could we do Monday at 10am? Thanks, Mike

From: Christensen, Kelley [mailto:kchristensen@mttech.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2016 4:56 PM
To: Mike Bordogna
Subject: RE: Montana Tech grad student would like to interview about Leadville outdoor recreation promotion to overcome Superfund stigma

Hi Mike,

Thanks for the response! Do you have time this Friday morning (1/22) for an interview?

Kelley
December 14, 2015

I, Julia Crain, sign this form to acknowledge that I know this conversation is being recorded, and the contents of this interview will be used in a master’s thesis, which may be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

[Signature] 14 Dec 2015

I, Julia Crain, authorize use of this interview to submit the contents of this interview to the “You Are Here” submitted.

Julia M. Crain 14 Dec 2015
Kelly,

I have the consent form to have our conversation recorded and here's give my consent.

Jim Davison

On Mar 21, 2016 4:24 PM, "Christensen, Kelley" <kchristensen@mttech.edu> wrote:

Hi Jim,

Thank you again for agreeing to do this interview with me. Please sign the consent form and email it back prior to our interview tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

Thank you, and it’s really appreciated!

Kelley Christensen

Technical Communications graduate student

ACE Tutor Coordinator
January 25, 2015

I, Elizabeth Erickson, sign this form to acknowledge that I know the interview with Kelley Christensen will be recorded. I acknowledge that the contents of the interview on Thursday, February 4, 2016 (and any follow-up interviews), will be used in her master’s thesis, titled “Best Practices for Superfund-Affected Communities to Overcome Stigma by Promoting Outdoor Recreation,” which may be published in whole or in part in a peer-reviewed journal.

[Signature]

[Date]
Yes...I consent.

Paula Kimney
Executive Director
Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce
961 Main Street
Berlin, NH 03570
603.752.6060 office
603.723.0537 cell
603.752.1002 fax
info@androscogginvalleychamber.com

ANDROSCOGGIN
VALLEY
Chamber of Commerce

From: Christensen, Kelley [mailto:kchristensen@mtech.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 12:49 PM
To: info@androscogginvalleychamber.com
Subject: Consent form

Please reply with your consent.

Kelley Christensen
Technical Communications graduate student
ACE Tutor Coordinator
January 11, 2015

I, Pamela Laflamme, sign this form to acknowledge that I know the interview with Kelley Christensen will be recorded. I acknowledge that the contents of the interview on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 (and any follow-up interviews), will be used in her master’s thesis, titled “Best Practices for Superfund-Affected Communities to Overcome Stigma by Promoting Outdoor Recreation,” which may be published in whole or in part in a peer-reviewed journal.

[Signature]

1/14/16

(date)
I, Milo Manning, am aware that the oral interview with Kelley Christensen will be recorded, and I have given my consent.

On Wed, Mar 2, 2016 at 2:42 PM, Christensen, Kelley <kchristensen@mtech.edu> wrote:

Hi Milo,

Thanks for agreeing to do an interview with me for my thesis. I've attached three documents:

1. My research waiver form which lets you know my project has been approved by the university Institutional Review Board.

2. The consent form. By signing this, or by replying to this email with your consent, you acknowledge you know the interview will be recorded. Please return the consent form or email me back your consent BEFORE our interview tomorrow morning.

3. The questions I am going to ask you.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to our chat tomorrow, March 3 at 10 a.m.!

Kelley Christensen

Technical Communications graduate student

ACE Tutor Coordinator
Christensen, Kelley

From: Howard Tritz <tritz29@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 1:10 PM
To: Christensen, Kelley
Subject: Re: Montana Tech graduate student would like to interview you about Superfund/outdoor recreation in Leadville for thesis

I give permission for interview with Kelley to be recorded.

Howard Tritz

On Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 10:19 AM, Christensen, Kelley <kchristensen@mttech.edu> wrote:

Hi Howard,

I will call you tomorrow at 1 p.m. Attached are the questions I will be asking you, and the consent form. You can either print it out, sign it and scan it back in, then email it back, or simply reply to this email with your consent. By consenting you acknowledge that you are aware the conversation will be recorded. Please reply with the signed consent form or email consent before our conversation tomorrow.

Looking forward to speaking with you!

Kelley

From: Howard Tritz [mailto:tritz29@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 12, 2016 5:04 PM

To: Christensen, Kelley
Subject: Re: Montana Tech graduate student would like to interview you about Superfund/outdoor recreation in Leadville for thesis

719-486-0193

On Sat, Mar 12, 2016 at 3:47 PM, Christensen, Kelley <kchristensen@mttech.edu> wrote:

How's this coming Wednesday at 1 pm? What's your phone number? I am out of town at a conference but will return Monday; I'll email you the questions and my consent form upon my return.
Appendix D: Interview Transcripts

D.1. Jim Davison (Anaconda, Montana)

Interview conducted March 22, 2016.

1. **Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?**
   
   We are one of the oldest Superfund sites in the nation. We were mentioned in the original CERCLA legislation that was passed right at the end of Jimmy Carter’s term. It has actually grown over the years from the small smelter site to covering about half of the town. The site basically is a result of copper smelting and mining activity. The pollution comes in three areas: It was airborne from emissions from the stack. It is surficial from tailings that were left in many areas. As tailings were moved around the county, that increased. And there’s a water issue from destroyed aquifers. Primarily, lead has been an afterthought, so it’s arsenic and copper, but also trace elements of cadmium, chlorium, gold, a lot of heavy metals that followed the original ore. In small areas, of Berlium, it was brought in as part of a pilot project to process in the early 1960s which has caused some issues also.

2. **How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?**
   
   I don’t think anybody realized it. It was just sort of under the wire. The company always had an environmental engineering department, they were trying to plant trees and do some cleanup, and had gone to a lot of effort to reduce the pollution. And one of the reasons the smelter closed because they were facing a $100 million expense to clean up the emissions equipment on the smelter. That was probably one of the 15 reasons the smelter closed. The community was more in shock from losing its major employer that looking at Superfund. Even when the natural resource lawsuit came in, there was a real controversy in the community of not wanting to hurt the company, even though the company had left the community. Also didn’t want to get involved in the lawsuit, which was a mistake also. Because the company was still operating to some degree in Butte. People traveled over there.
   
   (All operable units still listed). It probably will not be completed, the actual physical work there’s probably about another 10 years’ worth of physical work. I don’t think delisting is anywhere on the horizon. I doubt it will ever be delisted. Just because here it’s been more of a cover-up than a cleanup. The waste left in place, you know, the solution is pollution will have long-term effects on the community. This site is so vast there was no way to do complete removal. There has been removal in residential areas, but there have been other areas that would good for industrial redevelopment, where waste has been left in place, which has actually hurt us in redeveloping. So much of the waste left in place depends on institutional controls. Which means, those institutional controls, making sure people don’t go through the cap, or if they do, the waste is addressed in some way. Those controls will never go away because the waste will always be here, unless somebody comes back and actually cleans up the waste, or the properties won’t be developed in a traditional form.

3. **Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?**
   
   Oh absolutely. I don’t think so much within the community. But we certainly see it in trying to redevelop. I’ve been working with a firm for over two years to have them build a $158 million facility. The investor going along with it finally physically showed up on the site and
said he wasn’t going to build it on an old Superfund site, and we lost it. We’ve been fighting this for well over 30 years, 35 years. Even other mining industries have looked at developing here, but because of the stigma of Superfund won’t do it. I don’t think (tourists) realize it’s Superfund anymore. We did 30 years when ARCO had sign along the fences of the highway that said “do not enter, toxic waste site”. People would come in, roll down their window, get their gas and leave town because they were going to glow. I haven’t heard that activity in probably 20 years. Now that a lot of the lands have been finally grafted over, certain times of the year they’re nice green fields, so I don’t think visitors to the area take notice. If anything, we have some people in the recreational area that ignore their responsibility, for instance they’ll take 4-wheelers or bikes up areas and rip it up, locals too, and don’t understand they’re hurting the cleanup efforts. Let the grass establish before ripping up the fragile cleanup areas.

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
   - If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
   - If such a document or documents exist, may I copy of it?

   It has been probably for the first 25 years it was scattered. Certainly in the last five years the county was finally funded with a Superfund coordinator, where the final settlement for a trust fund to keep the institutional plans in place, there’s been a much more concerted effort on the county’s effort to have a plan. That lies pretty much within the local government, which we can see in the local development permit system. The county going into some areas, doing some of their fill site work to alleviate issues ARCO has ignored or gotten out of. With that plan, hopefully it gives investors and visitors and other people in the community greater confidence that they’re not going to have exposure. Both physical exposure and exposure to liability.

5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

   I think it is a goal and I think we’ve seen ARCO pull back from what their promises were 25-30 years ago. A lot of their cleanup was to recreational standards. We had a vision that visitors would be able to access some these areas. Be it by controlled access, via a bus to get to the stack viewing stand site so people could see that, or with other people being able to hike or take trails for bicycle or to be on the ponds, horseback riding, we’ve seen that certainly pulled back from ARCO the last five years. They don’t want any access. They had promised us at the time not only access and rights of way, but actually to build trails around the community, but that seems to be completely off the radar right now, and in fact actively not supporting that effort. They have a fear of someone digging through their caps and they’ll have liability. The Gulf (of Mexico) issue has really burned BP-ARCO. There’s still an active group in the community trying to build the interactive trails. We still have no good access to the Greenway trail, which the idea was to get to the greenway through Mill Creek through existing ARCO lands and easements to get that trail into Anaconda and also to have a trail into Opportunity. There is nothing on the horizon, even their cleanup of the rail lines, the trolley lines, there’s just a real pushback. We think that is important, one to attract visitors to the community. The long-term vision 30 years ago is that we’d have a trail from Whitehall to Philipsburg. There was even some cleanup through some Forest Service land west of Anaconda last year where at least they’ve left the bed cleaned out where a trail can be built out in the future. Some people are cooperative, but that extra step ARCO had promised to get into lower cleanup efforts, there has been a 180-
degree turn. But getting over that sour milk, the reasons for trails are visitors would also make Anaconda a more livable place because restoration efforts attract back lots of office operations. There are people who want to be able to walk out of their back door into nature. We’ve certainly seen that happen. Twenty-five years ago we didn’t have an engineering office in town. We have four now. A lot of a reason they’re here, they can attract the employees, young engineers that want to live in the area.

One we had a CEO (chief executive office for the city-county) when they were developing the areas to discuss sort of drop it. We don’t know what’s happening now because there’s a gag order on negotiations. So as we prod from the outside on people in the negotiations, we get hints on what’s happening, and we get hints also from the EPA we have to find other ways to get this access. ARCO asked the judge for the gag order.

The Greenway, the Yellow Ditch trail going from Fairmont into Mill Creek. We’ve mapped out where that trail could go. We’re trying to deal with other landowners, they’re growers and their farmers and they don’t want their land disturbed. Also what we call the trolley trail, it was an old trolley line that ran from Anaconda to Opportunity. When they remediated, part of it is still there, but the rest they took out. It could have been a great trail through Opportunity and then to get on the Greenway trail. They built the new park out in Opportunity to connect as a trailhead not far from the Greenway, and be able to pull in that direction. But if we’re trying to attract tourists in from Fairmont, with biking or walking, they’ve got to go on the highway or down the Crackerville road, which is not exactly safe for those activities.

The Greenway has been Milo’s baby for 25 years. He was the biggest advocate of the Trolley Line Trail and Yellow Ditch. He’s, what, 78, he sees another 3-5 years on the Greenway. That’s where he has his energy and his focus.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

Four-season activities. If we take the last winter season, where there besides skiing here, the cross country trails, certainly ice fishing, winter fishing. Watching the wildlife. Hikes. Mountain climbing. Winter hiking. We’re getting now into spring so some of the spring birding trails are starting to open up. You have the bike trails, hiking, the camping. The horseback trails as you get in to spring and summer and fall seasons. Certainly you’re getting into some of the spring hunting. These are things that aren’t necessarily the rec opportunities in town. Organized sports. As fishing season opens, all the streams. Blue ribbon streams that go through town. Getting out onto the Clark Fork, the watchable wildlife. At Warm Springs Ponds people are out watching the birds come back. All summer and spring, during mating season seeing the waterfowl and the eagles and the other larger bird population. Watch them as they raise their young.

Talking ponds, ARCO did a lot of barrow pits to put clean soil on top of dirty soil, and left a lot of area for water fowl. We were hoping they would have dug one big pit so we could have had something like a fishing area out along the highway and provided some recreation like that. They didn’t do it. Getting into the fall hunting season, the fall bird season, upland birds. The hiking, the colors you can see in the mountains, the fall migrations of the birds. Some birds we haven’t seen here in a 100 years are starting to come back. More of the watchable wildlife. All through the summer the mountain trails for biking and hiking.

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?
The biggest recreational site that has been developed has been Old Works. Old Works isn’t really a golf course, it’s a creatively irrigated mining site. And that’s how we got it through EPA. It wasn’t going to be an acceptable alternative to cleanup. And so we said all it is just an irrigated mining cap, we just want a little creativity with it to help the community. The trolley line runs along the toe of the slag pile. Part of the issue is how you maintain them. Other recreational activities, how do you use the Opportunity Ponds for upland bird hunting? You’ve got 10,000 acres for nice grassland. That’s where the elk head down to and they’re just grazing in there. Moose. Deer. Those huge populations. Somehow or another they’ve got to be culled. You’re always seeing vehicles that have hit a moose or and elk or a deer on the highway. Something that’s never been an issue before, but there doesn’t ever seem to be a deep discussion of how that’s going to be managed. In the urban-rural interface, how are those herds going to be managed? We’ve seen an increase in deer population. As a kid, I never, and I’m a native, I never saw a deer in town unless one happen to get lost. They are nuisances, in some cases menaces. Who ever heard of hitting a deer with your vehicle in the middle of town? Part of it is pressure from wolves and part of it is there’s so much great grass around the community so they continue to wander in. Great to watch them in rural areas, not so much around people.

8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?
   - What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   - Is there a document I could have a copy of?
   I don’t know how organized we are. I think in certain arenas there has been an effort. Certainly in the financial arena we’ve tried to get investment and needing these institutional controls so that has certainly been organized. I think time has helped a lot so people from the outside don’t think of it as Superfund. The real organized effort is to now show it as a great place to come and recreate. So we’ve dealt with the one stigma, so that we’re half way there, we have to start pushing it the other direction to start marketing who we really are. And we’re starting to do that.

   The chamber site a little bit. The trail society, which is basically under 35-age group individuals. Many of them involved in Superfund and they like outside recreation. They’ve developed some trail guides. They eventually will be online. If you look at Arrowhead’s website, the chamber website a little bit. Facebook sort of stuff – Anaconda trail society.

   There’s a real need to do more of that. We’re eventually getting organized. How much energy do people have when they’re going in 18 directions?

9. Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?
   It has definitely been in the last five years. In fact, really actively, we’ve got a group that we get together every Monday called Accelerate Anaconda. Talking about branding materials and working with the Chamber to do a new billboard out on the Interstate. The interesting thing, people want to tag the thing ‘Discover Anaconda,’ but more so they don’t want the stack in the picture. Eliminate the stack, eliminate that image. People my age and older that remember smoke coming out of the stack. Most of the people that are working on this stuff now either didn’t live here at the time or weren’t born when the stack ran. They’re closing that historic connection. I think it’s positive. For years people thought the smelter would come back. People have to look at different ways to make the community grow and thrive. We’re in the middle of this beautiful area, and one as citizens we have to take advantage of it, and two, and it’s a resource to invite people bring more industry, or invite people to visit and create a visitor industry. The number of
bikes I see around town, people just getting out and bicycling, people out walking, is increasing. We’ve done this effort for Healthy Anaconda and Walkable Anaconda in all different kinds of venues, as much as for the citizens here as, oh there’s three bicycles going down the street right now, and for visitors.

10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
   - Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?

   Not really. Unless we get into the bed tax stuff, the motels have been much more filled year round. They get much more filled up year round anymore. The people who are camping and that sort of stuff, hard to get a handle on those people. Certainly when we look at cycle traffic, there’s much more bicycles. We’re working on trying to do an bicycle, outdoor recreation camp, we’re going go in for some funding this year to do one of those. Talking to Pete Wertz, it was his 20th anniversary of being in business, the bike shop guy. He does bike stuff half the year and ski stuff the other half the year. He said he’s done more ski tune-ups this year than he ever has. Last year was a record year for his bicycle tune-ups. Come next fall when the new brewery is open, you can just top it all off.

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
   - May I have a copy of these materials?
   - How were these materials developed?
   - How were these materials distributed?

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?
   - Oh yeah sure, no problem.

13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

D.2 Milo Manning (Anaconda, Montana)

Interview conducted on March 3, 2016.

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?
   First of all the smelter shut down Sept. 30 of 1980. And ARCO started tearing down the smelter. There was a group of people got together and lobbied to save the stack itself and turn it over to the state as a state park. But ARCO contracted with Cleveland Construction to do the demolition. ARCO’s thought was they would tear down the smelter and walk. And then EPA said, oh wait a minute, there’s a little law called CERLCA that says if you create a mess or buy a mess, then you have to clean it up. So it was after that EPA, DEQ, and ARCO started negotiating what they were going to have to do for cleanup. When they were looking around at both Anaconda and Butte, looking at the polluted Silver Bow Creek, Deer Lodge River, and the Clark Fork, and Bonner, then they decided all of that was to be included within the Superfund site, making it the largest Superfund site in the world. Sometime after 1980 it was established and I’m not sure what date it was formally established.
You have the smelter hill, what we call the Opportunity ponds going from Anaconda to down to the Deer Lodge River, you have smoke emissions from the smelter that contaminated the land around Anaconda, and some of the yards in the town itself. The Superfund site was so large they broke it into what they call operable units. EPA and ARCO would look at each operable unit and decide what kind of cleanup was best for the operable unit. And the criteria was any contamination dangerous to human health and the environment. A lot of the remedies they came up with were to remove it or to cover it up to protect the environment and the human factor. One of the things they started, which leads into your area, the old smelter, what we call the Old Works, which is on the north side of the valley had been abandoned since 1902, but it still contained contamination. And so one of the things they decided was what they were going to do with that area. With that OU, they were going to just cover it up with clean soil, protect it. We had a city manager, Gene Vukovich, who had seen similar properties in Idaho that were converted into a golf course. He suggested to ARCO they construct a golf course. Part of the criteria that EPA required was protection of the site in perpetuity. And so they were always responsible for making sure that the cap would never be disturbed. So ARCO took a good look at the area and they decided it would cost $50 million to clean it up to state you could build residential housing on it. A jack Nicklaus designed golf course would cost $25 million. So ARCO decided they would do Anaconda a favor and build them a golf course out of the kindness of their hearts.

That was the start of that. A group of people formed an organization called Arrowhead. Arrowhead went down and interviewed Jack Nicklaus’ Golden Bear Company to determine design of the golf course. They thought once it was completed, Arrowhead would be managers of the golf course. They didn’t get along too good with the representatives of ARCO, so ARCO turned everything over to the county instead. That was one of the areas they looked at. They also did yard cleanup within in the community and had to determine criteria of what was contamination, what was the level, basically it’s arsenic that’s the COC, the Contamination of Concern they have to deal with. Most of the arsenic in town was airborne emissions. So it was the surfaces of the yards that was in danger. They came up with criteria of 250 parts per million of arsenic. If it was 250 or over, they would clean up the yard, if it was under they would not. Other areas, including the Deer Lodge area, the level of arsenic was a lot lower, like 75 ppm. But here they established 250. And that was between EPA and ARCO. Some people felt it was too high of a level and they should lower the level. They did extensive community yard cleanup. A little bit of lead/arsenic dust in attics to abate.

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?

It was (controversial) to begin with. Mainly the elected officials and chamber of commerce people were concerned about the Superfund designation, that it would be bad for business and bad for tourism. However, when they really looked at it, they could see that if they were going to get anything done, it had to have that Superfund designation. Of course the community never has any choice of whether it is, or it isn’t. It’s condemnation, it’s going to be Superfund. So the chamber tried to play on that and they had a big campaign, they called themselves the Super Fun Community, with the idea that even though we’re a Superfund area, there’s a lot of recreation and super fun in the community. And so that kind of took away a lot of the negative concept people had. They could see that with the remedy and cleanup going on, there would be a lot of jobs created. And with the smelter closing, that was a big factor here, that yeah, there would be a lot of jobs in the future.
ARCO thought they would be here 20 years, and it may another 20 years before they’re done. The site is so large and there are so many areas they still have to take care of. One of the most controversial parts of this was when they were taking care of the Bonner/Milltown Dam, and they took the dam out at Milltown. They were trying to figure out what to do with the contamination that was in the soils underneath where the reservoir was. They were trying to decide to build a repository in that area, or one of the options was to put on a train and take back to the Opportunity Ponds, and use as a cover material on the ponds. The arsenic levels in reservoir were like 170 parts per million, which was less than some yards in Anaconda. And they could put cover material over the ponds, since it’s a huge area they had to cover, but the soils in that silt in the bottom of the reservoir was so fine that it packed up and wouldn’t allow growth, even though the soil itself could have been a growth medium, so nothing would grow. They had to add more soils. The people in the community of Opportunity, which probably isn’t much closer to the ponds than the city of Anaconda is, they were all up in arms they were bringing the contamination into the Opportunity Ponds and adding to the contamination within the community of Opportunity. It really wasn’t that bad is what they thought. Some hack from Missoula wrote a book, Opportunity, and it was very negative. There were a lot of facts that weren’t facts that were mis-true in that book. So that kind of added to the controversy in that area.

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?

Yeah, especially like Opportunity and in the beginning. But I don’t think, since they started, and this has been going on a long time, I don’t think that’s still a factor. I think they saw that they are cleaning up the contamination and in order to do that they had to be designated Superfund. They feel it’s more of a positive thing, that we’re going to have a cleaner community when they get completed. Back in the ‘80s when they started, that was a new concept, Superfund.

I think that because of the recreation opportunities that are here, that the fact that there is a Superfund site, I wouldn’t think it would have a negative effect.

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?

- If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
- If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?

Not really. I don’t think there was a cohesive group. The chamber people started advertising a Super Fun community, and trying to take advantage of the name to advertise recreational opportunities in the area. Other than in the planning office, we had to come up with some restrictions on how land could be used. ARCO needed that because there were areas where they did cover up instead of cleanup, so there had to be restrictions on the land use and what had to take place before anybody could build on them. They hired some professional planners and sent in to Anaconda to help the planning office develop these plans, the development permit system. And it’s been revised a couple times since we first wrote that. Originally it was based mainly to protect ARCO.

Not really other than elected officials, city-county government itself that was involved. The other group that was formed, this Arrowhead group, when they saw they weren’t going to run the golf course, there was grants from EPA called Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) in the
amount of $50,000. So Arrowhead applied and received TAG grants. They used that, the purpose of TAG is to form group to help community that will understand Superfund and to do research and inform the community of what’s going on as far as Superfund. After I retired from the planning office I was involved with the TAG group also. They still come out every once in a while with information of what’s going on, with Superfund, the cleanup that it’s occurring, what’s happening, trying to keep the community informed. Adam Vauthier is in the Local Development Corp. building and he’s leading that group now.

5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

Yeah, I think it really is. It’s really what’s driving it right now. We really don’t have a large tax base. We don’t have a lot of employment opportunities. I think the recreation, especially the Jack Nicklaus golf course brings a lot of people in. The ski area west of town. Georgetown Lake a great recreation site. The Big Hole River is a blue ribbon stream that has a reputation. A lot of people come to float the river or go fishing. That brings a lot of out of town people into this area. The city-county airport, when that was getting started, we had a drive to expand the airport, lengthen the runway so that small jets like Jack Nicklaus’ jet could come in and land. Since then, there’s been a lot of private jets coming in, bringing people just to come in and play golf. One thing led to another.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

One thing that came about from this is that there’s the historic preservation act, that says if you are impacting a historic site, then you have to do some sort of mitigation, whether you’re taking pictures, or whether you’re doing something else to offset the impact to historic site. Because ARCO was building a golf course and we considered the Old Works area, the old smelter a historic site, ARCO had to do mitigation for impacting the site, for putting a golf course on it. What they did for mitigation was build two trails. One is called the Old Works Trail that goes up behind on the old rail bed. We did signs pointing out the attributes of the smelters, etc. in Anaconda. They also built the lower trail from Cedar Street to the Galen highway, which is another trail ARCO had to construct as part of the mitigation.

When we were looking at the historic aspects of both Butte and Anaconda, there was a combined group, one of the few times Butte and Anaconda got together and agreed on anything was that we formed a plan ARCO needed called the historic preservation plan. In that plan, it outlined any historic sites that we could come up with and what we were going to do to enhance those sites. When we were going that, that was the start of the greenway. In that plan it said that what we wanted was a passive recreation corridor between Butte and Anaconda, which included the BA and P railroad. We wanted to have something to show these historic areas. Butte had what they called Project Green, which was similar, they were coming up with all these things as the result of the cleanup. And we went to ARCO with this plan and they said since they had to clean up Silver Bow Creek as part of remediation, if we formed a legal organization, then they would assist monetarily with this plan.

And so we formed the special legislation to form a multi-county district called the Greenway Service District. ARCO gave us $500,000 for planning purposes. We hired Pioneer Technical Services to do the planning. They gave $1 million for O and M, and they gave us all the land along SBC so we could build the trail and all the other amenities for the greenway. Then ARCO disagreed with EPA/DEQ on how to clean up Silver Bow Creek. They walked away and
DEQ had to take over to do the remedy. So we lost a million dollars, and we didn’t get the land. But we did use the money to do the planning, that was the start of the greenway. In the meantime, the state sued ARCO for damages to natural resources, they got a settlement of something like $400 million, and started the Natural Resource Damage Program to offset some of the damages done to the natural resources. The Greenway applied for those funds and received some every year, and that was the money the Greenway used to develop the Greenway. Not only did we build recreation features like the trail, but we added to the DEQ funds to enhancements to Silver Bow Creek. Under remedy, they only have to do enough to protect human health and environment. The Greenway funds, the NRD funds are used for restoration, which was to take it one step farther and bring it back to the original condition before it was damaged. They added willows, they added a lot of plantings, they did a lot of other things on top of the remedy to make it better. That’s basically what the Greenway is doing. That’s another recreational area.

Under what the NRDP has outlined, the Greenway to was to follow the Silver Bow Creek restoration operable unit. So we couldn’t be outside the boundaries. So our plan was to take it down the Warm Springs Ponds, which was another operable unit that ARCO was working on. But we did get permission from them to take the Greenway into Opportunity. The county was doing restoration of old Opportunity school area, to make a park and we wanted the park as a trailhead. That’s the terminus of the Greenway, is Opportunity. There’s another trail group in that is looking to connect Opportunity to the city of Anaconda with trails.

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?

We tell people it’s not really a golf course, an industrial irrigated cap over the Superfund site. It’s basically what it is. It’s a cap. That’s why ARCO will be responsible forever. They turned it over to the county, but if anything should happen to that golf course, then ARCO would have to come back and do remediation.

They anticipated so many rounds of golf to pay for the golf course and the operation of it. Because of our weather, and our altitude, we don’t get the number of rounds other courses do. And so they’re barely making it, as far as making a profit. So when they were low on funds, there was a big cry. ARCO gave them a loan, which I doubt will ever be repaid. The fact is, ARCO is still responsible so they have to make sure the course is viable. When Jack Nicklaus put his name on that golf course, it has a certain level of maintenance, and if whoever is operating it to their standards, then they would take their name off it. Then might not be as big a draw to out of state golfers if it wasn’t a Jack Nicklaus golf course. Right now they contract with Troon, which is a golf course management company. I think that’s part of why it’s sort of not making it, because expensive to have Troon manage things. But it has to be managed to Golden Bear standards. The bottom line is, ARCO has to come up with the money if it doesn’t make it.

One of the other areas was the old BA & P railroad, which was sold to a local company called Rarus and subsequently sold to Patriot Rail out of Florida. So that site is another site. As long as they’re active rails, they don’t have to do remediation. Well part of the rail went west to the lime quarry. That was abandoned, so they had to do remedie there. The highway department wanted to expand the highway going west out of Anaconda. ARCO made a deal they would give the right of way or sell the right of way to the highway department. After they cleaned up rail beds, and taking care of that, there’s going to be a trail built on top of that right of way along with the highway widening out there. There will be a trail going west on the old rail bed. They’re putting in a new sewer line in the west valley, and so they’re waiting for the sewer line to go through before they start building the trail there. That was the whole idea, to use these areas, sites, that were cleaned up to put trails on for recreational trails.
One of the things we looked at was taking a trail along the Opportunity ponds which ARCO has to remedy down to Warm Springs and tie in with the Greenway down in that area. ARCO said they would do that, but they reneged on that promise. EPA can hold them to it, but EPA reluctant to go beyond what they’ve negotiated.

Another area they called the Yellow Ditch. Yellow Ditch was built about 1931-32. It took water out of Silver Bow Creek down by Gregson, down by Fairmont and carried water all the way into Opportunity Ponds, to settle the dust. Back in the days when Silver Bow Creek was running red from pollution, that water stained the ditch a yellow color. ARCO was responsible for cleaning up Yellow Ditch and it’s in progress right now, it’s under way. We wanted them to leave the right of way in so we could have a trail on top of that area, but ARCO said no, so there’s that local group trying to find an alternative route for Yellow Ditch trail that tie in with the Greenway by Fairmont and bring it in to Anaconda. We had a design and right of way, what we wanted to come in by Milk Creek and come down around the Anaconda ponds and the black slag pile. There is a footprint for the trail if it’s ever built, come through east yards to Benny Goodman Park. We’ve had these plans that keep getting revised for trail system throughout the community, but a lot depends on ARCO, and they’re not the most reliable company to deal with.

8. **Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?**
   - What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   - Is there a document I could have a copy of?

Yeah I think so, I think there has been since the smelter closed. There has been a desire, it might not written down, to develop the area into a recreational area. The land around Anaconda was owned by the Company. And so they never did really care about trespass or who used that land. So between the Forest Service lands around here and what was called the Mount Haggin Livestock Company, what all the land was under for the Company, you could go anywhere you wanted. A lot of areas on company land used for hunting and fishing, people could go up, they have to ask permission, they just did it. That’s been for a 100 years. And now, after ARCO shut down smelter and Mount Haggin Livestock didn’t produce anymore, they started selling all these lands to private individuals. Become problematic for people to get up where they used to go all the time. Now it was privately owned and rich land owners are locking up the land, locking the gates, it has created a problem for people who were used to going up there. It’s always been a recreational area because all the land was quasi-public even if it wasn’t.

The county in the old days, some roads they designated specifically as county roads when they were surveyed. Other roads were used by the public even through they were never officially designated. That creates a problem. They’ve been driving on it 100 years and somebody locks it up and now have to prove it’s a public road and it gets problematic. Some of them, they’ve locked up the land, we’ve done research, and yeah, that’s declared as a county road. Others we can’t find a record because the county records weren’t all that clear. This area has always been used for recreation. That’s one of the reasons, the land issue.

9. **Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?**
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
   - Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?
10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
I think there has, but I’m not close enough to have any numbers. The chamber may have some. Somebody else might have that information. The motels could probably tell you if there’s been an increase in recreationists and I think there has, but I don’t have the numbers to verify it.
They’ve had a reorganization lately, and so the people that are involved now, are people your age that are getting restarted, getting going again, they’re involved in the trail society, involved in the planning office.
Charlie Soper, Jamie in the ALDC office, Kaitlin Leary – now in housing authority, Adam Vauthier’s group. They probably have more of a handle on that than I would.
11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
- May I have a copy of these materials?
- How were these materials developed?
- How were these materials distributed?
At the chamber, they’re in the process of updating that, mainly for tours around historic parts of the city. In fact I’m working on one for them. I’m trying to do some research on some of the older houses of interest. I think they’re talking about a digital tour, which an old fart like me isn’t really familiar with.
12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?
Oh yeah, I’d be glad to help.
13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?
Between Jim Davison, Kaitlin Leary, Jamie- they’ve been involved with Arrowhead. Talk to Lydia at ALDC. Dori Skrukrud in Butte, on Greenway.

D.3. Paula Kinney (Berlin, New Hampshire)

Interview conducted March 8, 2016.

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?
No I can’t. I’ve never heard of it until you brought it up.
2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?
N/A
3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?
I wouldn’t know, because I don’t know what the Superfund site is all about.
4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
- If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
- If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?
N/A
5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

Yes, it is. We have a lot to do up here, especially with demise now of manufacturing up here, there’s not a lot of jobs. We turned to our mountains, our rivers, our trails. And trying to make our area a destination now. We’re finding the people who do come here love it here and they come back. So we’re promoting ATVing, white water rafting, kayaking, fishing, canoeing, snowmobiling, hiking, all that kind of stuff. I would say yes. I know the chamber wants it, I know the city wants it. Among my peers we talk about it all the time. It’s what we have. We don’t have a lot of manufacturing up here anymore. All those big jobs were gone when most of the mills shut. It’s creating employment for some people. It’s keeping hotels open, it’s keeping the restaurants busy, the stores. We’ll get some people, someone in a certain business that has nothing to do with ATVers coming here. And they’ll say to me, Paula, I don’t directly benefit from an ATVers coming up here and I don’t really care, but it’s a trickle effect. If we can keep the stores, the restaurants, and the hotels busy they can employ people which in turn are spending money in our community. It’s commerce. Some businesses don’t benefit from it directly, from a weekend that’s really busy because there’s a big event and we have all the ATVers in town. So I would say yeah, it is a huge goal.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

They absolutely love it, I’ll tell you that. The city people come especially. They love the mountains, they love the river. I mean they love what we have for natural beauty up here. But I’ve got to say, the biggest thing they love, and I hear it all the time, is the community is so welcoming. The people are very welcoming. I think most of the community is on board with us doing this, bringing in people, making our area a destination. I just think people are nicer here. It goes back to what my daughter said. When she’s at a gas pump in Providence, nobody says hi to her. I flip it around. These Providence people come up here and they can’t believe it, they’re pumping gas, and someone says hey, how’s it going, and they say hi to them. It’s very comfortable coming up here. Every place they stay, they eat, they ask for directions. They love it. I get comments from people that we’re God’s world, we’re paradise, God’s country. They love our area.

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?

N/A

8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?
   - What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   - Is there a document I could have a copy of?

Yes, and that’s been a tough effort, I’ve got to admit. It goes back to, well, I grew up here. We were known as Stinkytown, and that’s back when the paper mills stunk real bad, and they did. Like if hockey teams would come up here to play hockey, because we’re pretty big on hockey – we’re Hockeytown, USA – which we’re trying to bring that back, we do have a professional hockey team now, too. Federal Hockey League, FHL. People did for the longest time – oh you’re from Berlin, the place that smells. So that did take a while to finally get rid of that perception of the stinky mill town.

It’s a lot of our efforts to get visitors to come here. It’s our marketing, our promotions. Word of mouth is the best thing. You have a bunch of people come up here and they love it and
it’s beautiful, they pass the word and come back with more friends. I hear it all the time. Oh, I was up here last year ATVing, and I’m bringing back all my friends next year, I’m telling them how nice it is up here.

So I think it took a lot of pushing the area, getting more people to keep coming up. And realizing how much cleaner it is up here now. Our river is cleaner, our air is cleaner.

9. **Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?**

Right. ‘Cuz it’s here. We have miles and miles of trails. We have gorgeous mountains. Our river is beautiful. We have all four seasons, so we can make lots of different people happy. Some come back every season.

10. **Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?**

- **Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?**

Oh definitely, I don’t want to hand it all ATVing or to OHRVing, but a huge portion of it is that. I have some Google Analytics from all last year. Facebook insights, my Google Analytics off my website. I have that kind of stuff I could send you.

I don’t have exact numbers, but I’m already getting great comments. Our hotels are in Gorham, New Hampshire. They’re six miles south of here. And I’m already getting comments like from one women from the Top Notch Inn: Paula, fantastic job, the chamber’s doing a great job. My numbers are already high for the season coming up. I’m looking forward to a fantastic summer. Her reservations already up for the summer coming up. I released 2016 schedule of events. We have huge events. I’ve got hand a lot of it to these events we hold. We hold these signature events bring the people to the area and they come back. In the summer, it’s the Jericho ATV festival. And in the fall, we have a huge one, it’s RiverFire. And we have other events in between. But she had to comment right away that the way we put the events together this year is fantastic and her numbers are up. I have a few other business testimonials.

We have this other thing called the Jericho Warming Hut – it’s a snow machine warming hut at the top of the mountain – because we do have Jericho Mountain State Park. I mean, that is our diamond in the rough here. People sign in, in the warming hut, not everybody does, so we kind of figure out an average. I can send you that analysis too. We do each season. We track it by zip code.

And another thing I’ve got to tell you, you know how we don’t have hotels in Berlin? But people are starting to think outside the box. I have a friend of mine who bought a three-story apartment building just on a street here in Berlin, lower east side, by my house. He’s remodeling it, he’s already booked all kinds of weekends. Because when you think about it we opened our streets to ATVs. You can ride our streets to go to the trails. You can go get gas, you can go to the grocery store. He calls himself On-the-Trail Lodging. He’s on the street, but that’s the trail. And it’s an apartment building with three gorgeous apartment he remodeled. He’s renting them out to people. Another guy bought an old farm, up on a hill we have up here. He’s calling it, I think, Berlin Trails Inn. So all these little things are cropping up, people are investing in houses and they’re renting them out. We don’t have a hotel yet, but we have these little things going on in Berlin. You’re coming up here in a group of eight to 10 riders, you might as well rent a house or
an apartment. You can do groceries, the kids can have more room, not be in a hotel room. So things are cropping up in Berlin like that. And that’s what we want to see, we want to see more of that kind of stuff happen.

We have rental agencies, they rent snow machines and ATVs depending on the season. We’ve got two now in Gorham, one in Berlin, and further up north, more of them are cropping up because of the trails. People from the city are coming here, and they’re trying it. They don’t have an ATV but they’re dying to try it.

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?

- May I have a copy of these materials?
- How were these materials developed?
- How were these materials distributed?

I’ve got posters, I’ve got brochures.

We do have a marketing plan, which we smartened up just a few years ago. The chamber learned how to go after Joint Promotional Partner grants with the state of New Hampshire. We’re on our second one, and we’re going to be going for our third. You need to have half the money. We went for $20,000 so we needed to have 10. They match it. We put out a marketing plan, and we show them where we’re going to market, and how we’re going to bring people to our area.

We do radio, we do print ads. What else do we do? We do a lot of social media. This year we’re going to do more on the Internet than we have in the past. My reach is still pretty good. I run several Facebook pages. My biggest one is Jericho Festival. I can put up a post, like I put up that 2016 event post, and within 24 hours, I had 17,000 people saw my post. I want to pour money into sponsoring more ads on Facebook. We can target our ATV riders.

We hired some professional services out of Concord, called Sullivan Creative. That’s another smart move that we made. She helped us come up with our brand. We’re trying to brand the area. We’re calling it: Your Adventure Starts Here. So we kicked off that campaign last year. We’re trying to follow the brand.

We want people to come here and have an adventure. It’s all about the experience when people come. You can say you’ve got this, you’ve got that. But if they have a bad experience, the hotel stunk, the meals were awful, they’re not going to come back or tell their friends.

We just got smart enough to start doing these analytic stuff. When we get awarded these grants, we have to answer it. We have to show outcomes, what worked and what didn’t work.

I’ll show you my marketing plan and the recent analytics. And it’s working because the places we marketed in the Internet are coming. That’s how we know it’s working.

How do I know this is working? I know this is working because we’re tracking it. We have a billboard down in Twin Mountain, and I don’t even want to deal with that billboard anymore. When that expires, I just want it to go. There’s no tracking what I’m able to get out of a billboard. I even asked people from our own area, hey did you see my billboard in Twin Mountain? No. No one even sees it. But if I’m doing a print ad in Connecticut, and I start watching my Google Analytics and Connecticut’s starting to show up or people from Connecticut are signing in my warming hut, I can say it’s working. I can get some hardcore data on it. And that’s what the state wants to see before they’ll give me more money. We’re getting ready to write our second grant this year, and we’re going after $32,000. Our marketing budget went up because our area had a great tourism year. I hate to sound like I’m bragging, but the chamber had a huge part of it. The money we poured into marketing and these events. These
events really started it all. That Jericho ATV fest and RiverFire are the two biggest ones. We have some smaller ones in between. But those two big ones really brought people to the area.

The Jericho Festival was started by our local ATV club. We’re going into our 7th one. They first couple years, they did it on our own and it was little. As a chamber, I was like, you can’t stop, I’ll start helping. The 4th, 5th, 6th we just kicked right in. We’re a partner now. It’s so good for the area. Last year, 6,000 people in one weekend. 2,000 on Friday went through the gates and 4,000 on Saturday. We’re expecting more this year. It’s going up every year. 2.5 days event

RiverFire, is a different event. It’s based here right in Berlin along Main Street along river. We set the boom piers on fire. It’s based around Halloween, we have pumpkins carved on bridge, so it’s very community oriented. It’s not a money maker. We don’t charge epopel to walk around and look at river. We have a lot of sponsors that step up and sponsor it. Became a tourist attraction because we promoted elsewhere. People started coming to see the fires and they loved it. Added the ATV aspect to it. We added a poker run, called the zombie poker run. It blew the doors off it. Have 3,000-4,000 people coming to (RiverFire). And that’s a 1 day event. Jericho Festival is two and half days.

These people come to these events and they love the area. It comes back to, I stayed at this hotel, the people are so nice, I booked another weekend, I’m coming back. A lot of the hotels and campgrounds have personal relationships with these people. I was just in Jericho Deli, a store up the street, and he told me he heard from friends in Connecticut he let them camp on his land on the side, and he said they already called me, they’re coming up for Jericho, for another weekend.

And some are buying houses up here. Hasn’t been a lot yet. Probably four that I know of myself, so there’s probably others. I have a couple friends of mine from lower New Hampshire that are looking for a house right now. If they can pick up a house in a neighborhood somewhere they’re on the trail.

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?
Oh sure.
13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

D.4. Pamela LaFlamme (Berlin, New Hampshire)

Interview conducted on January 19, 2016.

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?
Age is a really great question, but essentially when EPA listed on the priorities list for Superfund sites that was in 2005 I believe. The property is call the Chlor-Alkali Superfund site. It was used by the pulp mill on the property, Brown Company, James River, and all the users in between, for several decades prior to closing it up. They were making pulp for paper. The pulp mill was here in Berlin and the paper mill was in the adjacent mill in Gorham. The process that they used in the Chlor-Alkali site involved a lot of mercury and other volatile organic compounds. But really the mercury, they just kind of buried it there on the banks of the river. And it leached from the site downstream and it was found very far away, like 2 to 3 communities away in smaller quantities. But it was still a concern it wasn’t properly closed. Their whole reason for listing it, because it had no owner at the time, so apparently I have now learned – I
didn’t even realize that’s apparently what gets you to a Superfund site – it’s not necessarily how bad it is but that you don’t have an actual owner, that’s kind of what bumps you up. In this case the property went bankrupt with several other holdings in our community back in 2001. In working with other companies that interested in taking over the property to continue pulp making, but not in the vicinity of that site at all because nobody was interested in the liability. So we worked out a special situation between the state and the city in which we carved up a property that used to be over 120 acres. We carved up a parcel, 4.6 acres, literally right on the river, and carved that our and made it its own separate piece and then sold the rest of the parcel to the party that was interested in taking over the pulp-making operation.

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?

Really not that much, it’s weird to say. People had always known, that our city grew up around the paper mill and before that it was a saw mill. It literally grew up around the fact that we have a river that runs through our community that drops a significant number of feet over a short distance. Back in the day that was rather attractive to making power. The community was settled around the fact that people harnessed the power of the river to start sawmills. They were all along the banks, up and down the river in our community. Over time that evolved from sawmills to pulp and paper mills. We had International Paper, Brown Company, which were the two more significant, larger mills right on the banks of the Androscoggin. So our community has always been industrial, literally right in the center. Our downtown is right along the river and the mill is the center of the community. That provided the most jobs and it was very central to our economy. At the time when property went bankrupt, and subsequently was picked up by a new owner, and that owner ended up closing down the mill not too long after they came to town. It is anecdotally thought that they came to town for the assets which were largely related to the hydroelectric dams. They kept the hydroelectric dams and sold off the rest of the property and the pulp plant. There was a whole lot of cultural shock around those significant economic changes. I don’t think there was much, if any, real reaction to the fact that five acres of 120 parcel that wasn’t very active or productive at the point was listed as a Superfund site. And it wasn’t at all that it wasn’t well publicized, because it was at the time. We formed a community committee to talk about re-uses and what we might do with the property and what we wanted to see for the future. There was a lot of participation from the community, a lot of involvement. Several boards and organizations that had interest, but still today there’s really little interest in the fact that it sits there. I think a lot of that goes with the fact that the pulp mill, which was here in Berlin, the chemical processing of the output smells like sulfur, essentially rotten eggs. People always knew there were chemicals in the process but there was this really crappy slogan that people used to live by in the day, which was ‘Don’t complain about the smell, that’s the smell of money.’ Kind of crazy. People were aware it wasn’t the cleanest process, but somehow not disturbed by that. There are people who remember playing with mercury balls when they were children. Their parents would bring it home from the mill. It was apparently fun to play with.

Especially given the timeframe: It was listed in 2005, and that was a year before the mill formally closed for good. I think the recognition was, you know, let’s focus on the mill so they didn’t really focus on the Superfund site. And once the mill was closed, it’s been 10 years, I’m not sure everyone is done grieving, but people cleansed themselves through a bit of a grieving process, the idea was can clean the property up, what else can locate here kind of thing. I think people felt largely supportive of seeing something happen to it.
The property was 120 acres, plus or minus, originally. Back in 2002 when we chunked off the superfund site, it was that small 5 acre site and the 120 plus or minus acres. When the company came in to dismantle it, it was North American dismantling Corp. or Company, when they came in to do that, after they were done with their salvage process, they did their own property subdivision and chopped the property in half, so 60 acres and 60 acres. And the 50 southern acres were really where any of the value in the property still lied. There was a wood boiler that really wasn’t that old by standards of boilers and costs to install new ones, so lots of people came looking at the property for the boiler. That 60 acres was eventually purchased and there is now a 75-megawatt biomass facility. It’s still burning pulp, actually chips, but a very different process. It’s clean, it’s not really that much more efficient, but it smells like cedar. It smells really good somehow. The northern 60 acres, the acres adjacent to the Superfund site, that’s empty. There’s no building on it, there’s nothing happening on it. It’s still owned by North American Dismantling. They weren’t able to sell it. Subsequently to 2005 and the study done in 2007, and a report from 2008 or so, 39 acres of the northern 60 were not declared Superfund acres, but essentially EPA wanted to study those acres. They had reason to believe there may be some contaminants and perhaps mercury further out than just the 5 acre site itself. That brought down the value of the parcel but no controversy again. It’s really just a large overgrown parcel. There’s no buildings, it’s along the river, it’s just vacant. It’s just sitting there, hanging out.

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?
I don’t think so. I think it’s largely unknown that it’s there, unless someone’s been researching specifically. A lot of our negative feedback or press comes from economic issues largely. Employment statistics. Where we are in terms of tax rate and poverty. All of those other indicators. It’s way down on the list to get upset about, the Superfund site. There are other things to worry about so people tend to focus on those. I’ve to find that literally residents are their own worst enemies. Nobody is more self-defeating than the people who live there. I’m always amazed, people who come to the community, they used to live here or they’ve come back, and they say, wow, things look great, and yet somehow the people who live here can’t see any of the changes or progress. It must just be a human nature kind of thing.

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
- If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
- If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?
We do have a plan for sure. It was actually part of the EPA process of the listing of being a Superfund site. They hired a consultant and funded the study. The consultant came in in 2006 and worked with us to come up with a plan. We put together the Chlor-Alkali Reuse Planning Committee, and spent several meetings going over the property, over conditions of the community, and talking about what we might want to see on the Superfund site. Highest and best use, in a way to help give EPA some direction in their cleanup process. They wanted to know from the community what we were looking at, what we were thinking of and what made the most sense given its surroundings.

We had Planning Board members. This property is located across the river from a property known as the Northern Forest Heritage Park, which is a property that was built as an interpretive property to interpret the city’s history around logging and paper making. It donated
by James River, the owner of the mill at the time. The Northern Forest Heritage Park, their staff of volunteers were asked to be part of this committee, our Main Street program because it’s along the Main Street and a primary route of the city, city staff, or volunteers throughout the community who had a connection to planning, the park or the mill. We also had a couple former mill employees, as well as a local historian.

We didn’t make any brochures or anything, but we came up with a public document that was the planning report itself, and made that available for the community.

5. **Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?**

One, yes, we highly value it. That’s the other thing about our community, while we built up around the river, which is a natural resource to use it economically, there is also a huge value to the natural resources in our community in general. The paper company owned lots of land that they used for logging, but in turn they allowed the community to use it for recreation. For hunting and fishing. People rode snowmobiles across their property. That’s been its own challenge as those lands have changed hands over the years. But there is still a high value of recreation in our community. Even more so, it keeps changing and evolving with the times and right now there’s a huge value in our community and whole entire county in motorized recreation in the form of ATVs.

That property was definitely discussed in terms of its recreational assets because of its proximity to Northern Forest Heritage Park. There was a recognition that the property had been so industrial, and due to the fact that while it’s a five acre parcel, which is sizeable, but it was enveloped, it’s surrounded by the larger 60-acre parcel it was cut away from, so there’s no direct access to it, without going over the 60 acres. There was a recognition there was very little that could be done with it unless someone came up with plan for five acres and the larger 60 together. Which may happen given its status with the EPA. The probably best and highest uses might be biking, hiking trails, that kind of thing, along the river, giving river access to the property. Or working with Brookfield Power, Great Lakes Hydro, they are there ones who now own the hydroelectric dams and there is one adjacent to Superfund site, maybe working with them to do interpretative history and information about river as well as the hydro facility, again as a way giving access to the fact that it’s a working river.

The big thing was thing, the cleanup comes with a very high price tag, like $50+ million cleanup. With no owner to the property, EPA spent time finding a responsible party. Only in the last year has the responsible party come forward. Georgia Pacific the responsible party of record at the moment because they acquired the property through a merger with James River years ago. They acquired James River, who was an owner of the property at some point in the title history. Rather than try to fight with EPA, they have decided to become a partner. They have been doing own investigation at this point of the property and trying to come with reasonable solutions and a remedy that makes sense. They are hoping to have preliminary results available this spring.

There probably won’t be homes or schools on this property, but there is the potential to get it back to productive working property. You could have light industrial there, or well-regulated heavy industry. That doesn’t seem to be the way of the national economy anymore. Coming up with an office park, or some great recreational trails. There is some hope for that property thankfully if it gets cleaned up.

6. **What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?**
We’re on the edge of the forest. Though that forest is a very conservative in their work plan. That forest is a lot of non-motorized recreation. It’s really for passive hikers. They’re very strict about what can and can’t happen there. When they have planning discussions, every so often and do their own master planning, the communities here in this region, in this part of the forest, would like to see more access in terms of motorized. Not just ATVs, but snowmobiles and what have you because they’re an expansive amount of land. The lands that used to be former working lands of the paper companies turned over and went to private owners, large tracts of land for recreation are not as plentiful as they once were. Available to the public, that is. There’s always a little tension between the forest and the communities surrounding it because of those restriction. But it provides a great place for those who are true, pure hikers. That’s one huge resource. There’s also a lot of fishermen. The Androscoggin is a resource to them in that regard, minus the stretch from our city and into the next town where it’s still catch and release fish because of Superfund site. But north of here, and there’s quite a bit of river that goes up to head lake in Maine, the headwaters of the Androscoggin. People go all over the North Country for fishing. That’s still very plentiful here. There’s a large contingent of people who hunt. And then, of course, snowmobiling has been popular here for decades. And now the newest biggest thing in recreation is ATVing.

7. **Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?**

Directly across the river from it is the Northern Forest Heritage Park. That’s owned by the city now. It’s used and run by our local chamber of commerce. There is a lot of local community events that happen mostly in spring, summer, and fall. We’re also working on a river walk that will start at the heritage park and go north along the river throughout the community. The river walk, when it’s done, on the western side of river will be little over a mile in length to start. That’s the first phase. We’re starting a road project there this summer. We have sort of started parts of the river walk, because now the city owns the entire mile length we had been wanted to do for phase one. Preliminary activities, such as cutting of trees, trimming of bushes along the riverfront. There used to be old railroad ties from an old railroad siding that were removed. So just a lot of preliminary community work. We do have a design and a consultant we’ve been working with. We’re trying to secure funding to do it in concert with the road project we’ll be doing in the area this summer.

8. **Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?**

- **What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?**

- **Is there a document I could have a copy of?**

Yes, absolutely. Probably before that (Superfund listing). In 2001 when the mills closed for the first time, there was a whole lot of effort to change many things about the community. One, how we viewed ourselves and how others viewed us in terms of economy. Rather than relying on solely one form of economic driver, which at that point was the manufacture of pulp and paper, starting to talk about economic diversity. And really thinking in terms of having several pieces of an economic puzzle, if you will. There were lots of efforts once the milled closed again for the second time in 2006 to really start a more concerted effort for how we thought about ourselves and saw ourselves. The big issue there is there is still a lot of underemployment. The jobs and the wages that were paid by the mill when it was up and running were really were good wages and benefits. Most people who worked there didn’t need a college degree, and many of them didn’t even have to graduate from high school. There was this, you know, you get out of the school, you start working at the mill, and you’re making a great life for
yourself and for your family. Changing how one views work and how they get that work, and creating more jobs. We have created more works, not all in that type of manufacturing. We’re creating jobs for the next generations. Those challenges have made it hard for people to view themselves here in the community differently. We have had people move out of the community, and we have had people move into the community for the things we have done. And getting people to perceive Berlin differently outside is really tricky. One, there are still people who still think it’s a smelly mill town. Or two, they feel really sad for us because the smelly mill town is gone and they have nothing to replace it with. Or, three, there are people have really gotten to know us really well because of ATVing and interestingly enough, that more than anything else is changing the perception of who we are and what we are and what we look like from the outside more than anything else than we’ve done. And that was more accidental than anything. Those efforts to change those perceptions come from our chamber of commerce, which is really active in that effort, the city itself, our main street program. A lot of local organizations that are working on economic development, community development, and things to better our community.

We do a little bit of rack cards more focused on events that the chamber will do. They make sure they’re placed all over the state at key information locations for tourism. Working with state tourism department. But a lot of it comes from word of mouth, social media, or specific websites, such as those run by chamber, the city, those with any association with any of the ATV festivals or organizations.

The really big one, it’s called the Jericho ATV Festival, and it’s usually the last weekend of July or the first weekend of August every summer. And it’s huge. They started it years ago when, it’s a whole long story in itself, but essentially land was purchased by the state for dedicated ATV park here in the city. In order to get the word out they started the festival. And it was OK, there were some visitors, it was a small thing. It’s grown over the years. In 2013 there were 2,000 visitors, in 2014 there were a little over 4,000 visitors, and last summer in 2015, had just about 6,000 visitors for the event. It’s literally, the whole idea of ATVing has really exploded in our region over the last couple of years, and that’s really because word is getting out there. The ATV park itself is basecamp, it connects to 1,000 miles of contiguous connected trails throughout county. People can come here, get on their ATV and ride here forever and ever, at least that’s what it feels like to me, for 1,000 miles of trails. It’s become a really big deal. This past summer for instance, Berlin doesn’t have a lot of hospitality. Actually we have hotel in Berlin, and that’s because we were always the working class mill town. The town next to us, Gorham, just south of us, has all the hotels and restaurants. They are also located on the crossroad of major state-U.S. highways. They’ve been catering to the tourist crowd, which Berlin is trying to edge into right now. But Gorham, this summer, where I live, I would notice, so the ATV season starts at end of May. I noticed the first couple weekends the hotels were all no vacancy all weekend, which is a big deal. I would say, by late July, wasn’t just on weekend, it spilled over on Monday and Thursday, and in August there were full weeks of no vacancy. Our community really benefited from that in terms of busy restaurants and busy stores, people everywhere. The other unique part of the ATVing piece in North Country is that many of the communities allow ATVs the streets with traffic to get to the restaurants and the gas stations and the shops. Not just people on the trails; they’re allowing local businesses to gain the benefit of all the visitors to the area. Which is it’s own little controversy for some people. Nevertheless, it’s made a huge difference in all the communities associated with the trail system. It’s becoming the thing we’re becoming known for, which is exciting and happening very fast all with its own little
challenges and reservations, but it’s with better than being known as the smelly old mill town with a Superfund site.

9. **Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?**

I don’t know if it was a specific goal as it was a specific outcome based on the fact that talking through the history of the site, through the challenges with its future, it became obvious that it was one of the highest and best uses of the property.

I think the community, if you had asked them back then when we were doing the plan, which was 2007, which was nine years ago. It was a year or so after the mill had finally closed. The focus was anything related to jobs and tax base and employment. Of course those things are still important today, but as we start to make this really rather abrupt switch, as people are getting used to the idea that we might be a tourist community, I think people are seeing the value in having lots of different types of recreation available so it’s not just all about ATVs. So the idea of us doing a river walk on the western side of the river for instance, and wanting to connect it all the way around, if we could bring it all the way around. For instance if we could loop it would be really cool because there is a walking bridge not very far from the Superfund site. Trying to come up other really aesthetically pleasing, and providing access to things such as the river, coming up with those kinds of ideas are being met with a lot of support. As well as still wanting to balance that out with jobs and tax base. Seeing that tourists bring with them a lot of usually disposable income, you’re hoping that translates into jobs and the tax base in different way.

10. **Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?**

- **Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?**

Well, the plan hasn’t been implemented yet, because cleanup not done. The plan was simply here for the community. It’s pointed to as a tool in for instance the master plan for the city in 2010. We recognize that process has been done and that property is there to increase awareness. Among a small group of people being that it’s not ever been overly controversial or on the other hand largely discussed piece of property. I really do think that’s because there’s no building associated with it. The buildings are long gone. They buried waste there, which wasn’t done in a way that kept the waste there as one had hoped. It has permeated through the rubber containment, but yet mercury’s still finding ways out. There’s no visual reminder to anybody. I think the biggest probable community annoyance is that you can’t fish in that area, but because the Androscoggin is one of, if not the, most highly regulated stretches of river in the Northwest with all the hydroelectric dams, I mean there are four in Berlin alone, that area doesn’t see a whole lot of fishing anyway because the access to river because of the dams makes it tricky. That is also the beginning of stretch of river in which elevation drops significantly over the next couple miles. People complain about it, but it’s not really a hindrance because most people do their fishing up river anyway.

What is probably most significant and what you can see is there is a report done by Plymouth State University, they have an economist Dr. Daniel Lee, he’s been doing the North Country Economic Index for the last couple years. In response to changes in community here,
and in community to north, Groveton, that also had large paper/pulp mill that was shut down and was like the only thing in their community. This index has shown growth and increase in rooms and meals tax over the last couple years that most people would equate that people are staying for the ATVs, not just here but all over the county at this point, anywhere there’s lodging.

This has been the focus of our Main Street program for last four to five years at this point. There has been a significant interest. We started this five years ago in having a hotel in our downtown. One of big things around that was our local, we have an industrial park authority board, a quasi-judicial arm of the city. They were partnering with a developer, and they were the ones who commissioned a feasibility study for it. There are companies that specialize in doing hotel feasibility studies. It really seems not so complex and easy to put together. They’re putting together facts, figures, using census data, employment numbers, tax base. All of these really accessible pieces of information. But what they’re doing is drawing up a pro forma saying if they build this size hotel in this size community with this many visitors based on data that is almost always three or four years behind where you are at that point, which is the case when we did our feasibility study three years ago at this point, using data that was three or four years old. It showed it wasn’t feasible because of bed nights in Gorham at that point weren’t sustainable during the Monday through Thursday of the summer time. Because traffic weren’t up to what they needed for a franchise hotel. Our hope is that someone will come in again in the next year or two, and use data that is still probably three years out of date, but it’s probably going to start catching up and showing this increase in activity in the hotels that exist here, as well as traffic counts, room and meals information tax information. Things are on the up.

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
   - May I have a copy of these materials?
   - How were these materials developed?
   - How were these materials distributed?

I think the ones largely done by chamber. We’re part of larger initiative throughout the county called New Hampshire Grand, which was a branding experience that we went through. We hired national consultant who came in and spent significant amount of time in and around communities throughout the county trying to figure out what links them together and what makes them unique. So a lot of that came back to the natural resources in our region and at some point really focused on ATVs for sure. And that came with its own tagline called “Ride the Wilds” which is the 1,000 miles of trail. A lot of the materials out there now are related to New Hampshire Grand, to Ride the Wilds, while some of it is print, most done digitally through social media, and through the chambers, four chambers that coordinate throughout the country. Their websites look similar. On their websites you can kind of plan out your trip, like here are some suggestions of things for you to do while you’re here.

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?
13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

Paula Kinney – runs the chamber. Maintains all the social media, several Facebook pages. Does a lot of community outreach, the point person anything related to ATVing.
D.5. Julia Crain (Butte, Montana)

Interview conducted 12/14/2015.

1. **Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?**
   There is a complex of 9 Superfund sites in and around Butte. The Priority Soils (National Priority List) site which encompasses Walkerville to Timber Butte, Lower Area One, Walkerville, Centerville, McGloin Heights, Mine Flooding (the Berkeley Pit), Streamside Tailings (Silver Bow Creek) and Montana Pole.
   Superfund began in Butte in 1983. It primarily included the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit, a concentration of contamination. At that time each site was identified on its own to create the Upper Clark Fork River complex of sites. It is currently still listed.

2. **How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?**
   I was born the year the Butte hill was declared a Superfund site. My family was living in Walkerville. My mom sent my father to those meetings because she was concerned.

3. **Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?**
   It contributes to a negative perception. A great majority of the status Butte has held onto since mining shut down in 1983. Butte has a depressed economy, the inability to diversify its economy, even though there have been many efforts and Superfund hasn’t helped. That’s my personal opinion, my perception.

4. **What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?**
   - If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
   - If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?
   There is not a specific plan to address perception based solely on Superfund. There are a handful of excellent plans to impact Butte’s aesthetics and economic future. In 2008 Butte adopted a master plan and growth policies to understand land use to provide for growth. It guides land use changes through zoning. The URA has an excellent plan to deal with disinvestment in the central business district. The East Butte RRA has contributed to the construction of Butte Brewing Company, WET, CCCS, AWARE, the MAC, and a revegetation project by MSE.
   The Upper Clark Fork restoration plan (aquatic/terrestrial) has been fundamental.
   The Butte Area One plan is focused on improving quality of life. The NRD supported fishing and the acquisition of the Big Butte Recreation Area. There are plans to take back areas, to take back lost plants and animals, to open it up to recreational opportunities.
   Moulton Reservoir.
   The revitalization of Thompson Park.
   There is money to allow for recreation components in our area.

5. **Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?**
   Butte’s outdoor recreation opportunities have no been readily apparent as a prized possession of our economy. A community of sportsmen have the best interests of the community at heart. There is hiking, skiing, hunting, and fishing, but many people perceive Butte as
industrial. Missoula and Bozeman are the outdoor recreation destinations. We’ve been underselling the recreational opportunities that are available within miles of our city.

Through the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the chamber, the Butte Local Development Corporation, the URA, and the planning department, we highlight the amenities and resources in the community. Through grant acquisition through the planning department we are doing work in the natural resource areas. There are areas where people have the opportunities to bike, hike, ski, and horseback ride. But how do we get the word out? Butte has an incredible array of open spaces, national forest.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Tax Business Increment District are funding marketing efforts of recreational opportunities for mountain bikes and hikers.

There’s been strategic marketing in Outside, Sunset, National Geographic Traveler. This is complemented by the URA, Community Development, and Montana Magazine. We promote opportunities for access in Thompson Park, the CDT through Maud S.

We are elevating the conversation to bring the focus to complement the urban opportunities, like the Folk Festival and An Ri Ra.

6. **What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?**

Butte is located in the interesting geography of the Summit Valley. It’s mineral rich. There are to the east of town the Rocky Mountain Range and access to the CDT, to the south the Highland Mountains, the CDT, and Thompson Park, where there is biking and hiking trails, picnic areas, and interpretive signage. It’s a mixture of historical and contemporary uses. The old rail bed for the Milwaukee line. There are areas to understand the animal population present here, the unique flora, the wildflowers, the resurgence of terrestrial species.

With the remediation of Silver Bow Creek the cutthroat trout are returning to Silver Bow Creek for the first time in more than a century. In the last 15-20 years, fishing was something you did in the Big Hole River. Now you can fish in Silver Bow Creek. That was never a reality prior to the Superfund designation here.

7. **Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?**

There are recreation sites on top of Superfund. There’s the Copper Mountain complex, which includes a park, baseball fields, and a driving range. There’s Foreman’s Park. The trails traverse the area (a Rails to Trails project). There’s the Original Amphitheatre project on a former industrial site.

The community parks present are too numerous to mention. There are many areas that are targets for restoration, for planting trees and foliage. Some have been remediated, but some others have the opportunity to be restored.

8. **Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?**

- **What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?**
- **Is there a document I could have a copy of?**

It’s an unspoken effort we all take on beyond the scope of professional objective. Butte people are proud and strong. We hold dear our community. That toughness we perceive is to have a recognition of how deeply we feel connected to place. The way the residents of the community live their lives in to do the best for this place.

9. **Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?**
It’s definitely part of the Butte Area One plan. It’s focused on our natural resources and where many of our outdoor recreation opportunities came from. It’s an experience that’s quite rare when you think of most urban settings. The NRD, BAO plans are bringing awareness to natural resources, an increased awareness of the spectacular gem of Butte. It makes you wonder why the opportunities were not considered for so long. They’re based in the character of this place. Butte rose to greatness at the height of the American Industrial Revolution. People were always working. The leisure time we have today is a product of those efforts. We are able to access something so much greater.

My mom and grandma talk about their childhoods, of my grandma taking a streetcar to the cemetery or to the Columbia Gardens. Because of the industrial nature of the city of Butte necessarily had city dwellers more concerned with the goings on of the city.

10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
   - Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?

Butte still sees the majority of its tourism based on cultural heritage, on the history of mining, genealogical research, the role of labor in industry, ethnicity. Since the advent of the Montana Folk Festival, there is a much more rich offering of cultural opportunities. They’re now seeing mining heritage reimagined. The areas of the sites of extraction are now the sites of cultural infusion. The very nature of the Folk Festival turned the perception of the community into something bigger and broader. We’ve reimagined what we have in the community. We need to find the resources to promote the natural history, the geological history, the national forest, the waterways. Our stories are much more dynamic that mining and smelting. The natural resources, the wilderness, the open spaces – they are key to keeping people here today. It’s something extra we haven’t explored enough. But it’s something exciting to talk about in the future.

I think we’re doing a better job of attracting people to Butte for something greater than visiting the Berkeley Pit. That tells one small portion of Butte’s story. The Berkeley Pit happened in the later half of the 20th century. We need to leverage our entire story to be told in a way that is meaningful and educational, that puts the Berkeley Pit and mining in context of every person who visits it. Butte is a place where Superfund exists. These materials have a lasting impact on the industry of the United States. People all over the world wanted to turn on the lights, to start their cars. This collective experience has tremendous power. As the world focuses more on sustainability, it’s a great launching pad to tell the story of extraction risks, of the importance in teaching how to use responsible mining practices. I don’t fault the mining industry for anything – my family was made by mining. But we have the power to understand and to try to do better. That’s the lesson Butte has to teach the world.

Butte people are so down-to-earth, it’s inherent in who they are. It makes it difficult to develop a clear plan.

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?

In 2014 and 2015, the Butte Economic Development Coordinating Council, made up of private marketing, government organizations, and partners developed a plan to promote Butte. The ‘Elevated’ concept promotes a variety of opportunities in Butte that are new and different.
Elevated is a concept that works really well. We’re taking the narrative to a new level to talk about it in a way to make it shine. Business Elevated. Culture Elevated. Recreation Elevated. Fun Elevated. It’s a way to reimagine and appreciate the vast array of opportunities and elevated them. We’ve published ads in Montana Magazine, on banners and posters. There’s an app available from the Department of Tourism that’s available on iTunes.

It’s important to put these images in front of people who use it every day to perceive Butte in a new way. It’s a positive thing here, to leverage beyond our borders, to push it past southwest Montana.

The Elevated concept was in part inspired by Chelsea Newman. It’s really paramount to put the context of culture in the context of place. It took a lot for Butte-Silver Bow to buy into this new concept. It’s such a departure from how we’ve talked about Butte my whole life. It makes people believe they can aspire to something. It’s elevating the field in the name of innovation.

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?
13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

D.6. Elizabeth Erickson (Butte, Montana)

Interview conducted February 4, 2016.

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?
We are one of the original Superfund sites. The CERCLA law came into being in 1980. It was about 1982 they started talking about a National Priority List listing. Both Butte and Anaconda were listed in 1983. We’ve been a Superfund site for a long time.

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?
I think our community – they were so traumatized by, both Butte and Anaconda, by the job loss, they couldn’t wrap their heads around what superfund was. I don’t think it had a huge impact. It was, OK, we’re a Superfund site now. But we still have remedies being implemented. Some are still being argued about, what the remedies should be. We’re still in that active stage.

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?
I think absolutely there’s a negative impact. My kids grew up here, they went to the high school here. I remember sitting in the stadium, listening to the folks from Bozeman saying ‘dirty water.’ You say you’re from Butte and you hear, ‘oh really’ comments. What I do think is interesting, is it’s gone on long enough now, the kids have turned it from a negative to a positive. When my son graduated from high school three years ago, they won the state football championship. The kids on the Butte side were yelling ‘dirty water.’ There’s kind of a derogatory term for Butte kids – the ‘Butte rats’ moniker. Now I saw a couple of basketball teams named Butte Rats. They’re owning it. We’re going to turn this around, and it is what we are.

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
- If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?

- If such a document or documents exist, may I copy of it?

I don’t think there was really a plan to deal with the stigma. We talk about it a lot. It comes up. It’s this abstract thing that nobody knows how to get their arms around. There’s been multiple attempts to do that. There was the regional historic preservation plan to emphasize the historic tourism piece of it. It’s been successful, but not as wildly as they hoped.

One big success is the Copperway trail system. But it stopped there. We don’t promote it in a way it should be. A few years ago – we working with Butte restoration alliance on something you could hand to a tourist. It didn’t exist. We’ve put all this money in the trail system, but we don’t even have a map to hand to people. Now we have a map at chamber – but it’s not widely known. It’s put out by historic preservation office – a tour of Uptown Butte. You have to dig to find these things. We haven’t made it easy (for tourists), let’s put it that way.

5. **Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?**

   It wasn’t. Butte went for this historic preservation piece. I’m not saying it’s not an important piece. I just don’t think we even realized the need for the recreation piece of it. I always go back to when the trail went in along I-90 – a few people said to me, nobody will ever use that. Now you look at how many people use that – tons of people use it. Now with the Greenway (trail) getting finished up, one of the ideas was to promote a marathon on (the Greenway). I love to see things like Snoflinga (winter festival). We’ve missed the boat on encouraging that. We have great amenities.

   The Butte Natural Resource Damage Restoration Council put $1 million aside for recreation. What we were trying to do at the time we put that aside is $10 million went to removal of tailings along Blacktail Creek. We wanted to save $1 million to piece together the recreation piece after the cleanup is done. It’s a piece we lost with the contamination. We see it as important to the community. This is the Blacktail Creek berm, the Diggins East, the Northside tailings, the Parrot tailings. It’s the old Silver Bow Creek corridor, from behind the civic center to Montana Street.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

   We have all of that. We definitely have hiking and biking. The ski hill is not far away. There is lots of cross country skiing. We have blue ribbon trout streams. There’s horseback riding, kayaking, and camping. Campgrounds are close and the national forest is close. We have a ton of those amenities and we are not well known for it. And some (Butte residents) would say they’d like to keep it that way. There are lots of climbers – there are lots of opportunities for rock climbing. There’s hang gliding off the East Ridge. Even folks from Bozeman have been coming over this way, because the East Ridge is a pretty good place to do that.

7. **Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?**

   We’ve incorporated trails as part of the Superfund remedy. We have incorporated them right into the Superfund sites. The Copperway is the perfect example of that. Most of the old rail lines were contaminated for years. They’re nice flat areas where now we have trails. The trail system was built right into the Superfund cleanup of Silver Bow Creek all the way to the Warm Springs ponds. One thing we’re looking at over in Anaconda, we’ve got a couple of areas, the
Opportunity ponds, the old haul roads – they’re looking at putting a trail system on them. One area that was a conveyance for Silver Bow Creek water was very contaminated. We’re looking at putting a trail system on top of that.

There is a lot of community momentum to have the creek (Silver Bow) back. There are a lot of obstacles to that. In my mind, the first thing we need to do is get the waste out of there and see what we’ve got to work with. We have a great amenity with Blacktail creek. Maybe it makes more sense to look at creek recreation on that creek (Blacktail) than recreation that may not be natural on Silver Bow Creek. Probably with SBC, we’ve obliterated the headwaters with the Berkeley Pit. Right now Silver Lake water is used at the mine. Butte Water owns that line. They tried at one point to put Silver Lake water down the Metro Storm Drain (what Butte was called for some years). By the time it (the water) got to the bottom (of the creek bed) it was pretty contaminated. But there has been a groundswell of people saying could we use Silver Lake water in Silver Bow Creek. But streams are complex things. They need groundwater. This would be more of a water feature. It couldn’t run it in the winter. We still have contaminated groundwater underneath, and a capture system. Is there a point in time we don’t require a capture system anymore, can we have things in contact with ground water? And how do we deal with storm water off the hill? It’s complex to say the least.

8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?
   - What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   - Is there a document I could have a copy of?

I think we’ve had a lot of small efforts, but no concerted effort. There’s the regional historic preservation plan. The festivals have done a lot to change the image of the town. We’ve done a lot of economic development things that I think help. We have a lot of community groups that have tried different things to change that image. But we haven’t all been sitting in the same canoe pulling the same direction. I don’t say that as a complaint. There’s so many issues it’s really difficult for everybody to pull the same direction.

9. Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?

One thing I’d like to see about the Restore Our Creek coalition – a coalition of a bunch of different groups, they’re talking to each other. You’ve got this small group of people that have worked on these issues, but the information isn’t widely available in a form that the public can understand. Maybe the coalition doesn’t understand all the issues. But they can disseminate that information into the community. So much of what’s done (Superfund negotiations) is done behind closed doors, and that information doesn’t get out to the community.

The judge put a gag order on (Superfund) negotiations. The thought is that a small group could decide major issues and then bring to the community and that it would make it easier and the process would go faster. But we’ve been at it for 30 years. Maybe it’s time to try a different model. I don’t know if that happens at every site, if other sites have had their CDs (consent decrees) negotiated in different circumstances.

10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?

The festivals – absolutely. You can see the people that come to town for that. Within the community, the creation of the trails has allowed people to recreate within their community. You mentioned the Butte 100. You see things like that happen. There’s all the cross country skiing at Moulton, Homestake. You’re seeing that ball sort of start to get rolling, which is encouraging to me. I think we have a lot of community folks who are not as supportive of that. They say, well we need jobs, not trails. But I think the amenities encourage growth and recreation within the community. As a business owner it makes it easier to recruit people to Butte.

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?

- May I have a copy of these materials?
- How were these materials developed?
- How were these materials distributed?

The Uptown Butte map available at the Chamber.

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?

Yes.

13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

Jocelyn Dodge – with the Forest Service

If you’re looking at Anaconda, talk to Jamie Raisler, Kaitlin Leary, both on trails society. They’re working on recreation in Anaconda.

D.7. Mike Bordogna (Leadville, Colorado)

Interview conducted January 27, 2016.

1. Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?

Essentially, before we had water treatment plant. We had a large network of mines, we still do, on east side of town, our town sits on a hill, and everything drains down to Arkansas River. There were dewatering tunnels because we have a couple of volcanic formations, have a couple of calderas in county and they have percolated over eons or millennia, just an obscene amount of groundwater. The groundwater, as the miners found out when they came, was pretty spectacular from the perspective of they could dig in some places three or four feet and hit groundwater. That was great in establishing these little communities to mine the east side. It was a challenge when you’re digging shafts and stopes, and other formations necessary for mining. So there needed to a dewatering component to the mines. There were underground tunnels were dug to dewater the mines, and those oozed down to California Gulch floodplain, and that was tributaries into the Arkansas River. With Colorado water rights, we have a use it or lose it component to your water right. So farmers, ranchers, oh, and I should preface Leadville has some of the oldest water rights in Colorado, had to irrigate with water that was contaminated so they would not lose their water right. So that helped to spread the contamination out across bigger portions of the land.

One of those ranchers is still alive, his son is our current county treasurer, and his name was Doc Smith, and Doc was a veterinarian and noted that his cows were not growing in size as they should, that they had reproductive problems, they had cognitive and other nervous system impairments. He first raised this issue. Then we had a series of belches, or blowouts, because a
lot of the geology is of mixed types of rock and stone, so between that and having to keep shafts, drips and stopes open, as they would deteriorate and collapse, water pressure build up behind and create enough pressure it would blowout and release mine tailings in Arkansas River. The last time this happened was 1989, with a blowout from Yak Tunnel. And it ran the entire Arkansas River red to the Pueblo Reservoir and killed every living thing in the river. So Doc raised to local government and state government, and finally it went all the way up to the EPA, the issue that was happening with these mines that were continuously belching tailings into the river. As well his inability to maintain water right without irrigating his pastures with contaminated water.

Carter created Superfund towards the very end of his presidency, and then it was essentially defunded from the level it was proposed to be at when Ronald Reagan got into office. And in 1983 we were named a Superfund site. So that makes us 33 years old. They divided our site into 12 operable units, OU12 being the last one, and that one is site-wide water quality. The different OUs were based around the characterization of the metals on site, the result of having smelters in town. There was obviously the knowledge of what heavy metals do to people. And we had a very transient population in the 18 and 1900s. In 1890, right before we went to gold standard and the silver market crashed, we were heavy in silver, and so the population was close to 30,000 people. They were contemplating making Leadville the capital of Colorado. So logistically, it’s kind of funny, however we were the first electrified city in Colorado. We had the first elevator in Colorado. And we had great potable water system, and we still do because luckily none of that is combined with the runoff from the mines.

I’m going to jump all over because there’s so much history and so much intertwined nature to all this, before WWII, another dewatering tunnel was created and that was called the Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel, that was after Yak Tunnel, and the LMDT, as it’s called, was started and then in effort to get mines back into production because they needed the ore for WWII, then it was stopped, then it was restarted in Korea, and then it was stopped. As they needed minerals they would drive the dewater tunnel further, dewater the mines, let all that water go out into tributaries of the Arkansas River. It was finally purchased by Bureau of Reclamation. I don’t remember when the BOR bought the LMDT. They bought it for a dollar, it was a horrible investment, but thank god for us, because that dewatering tunnel we would not have had a culpable partner able to pay for long-term treatment.

There were two water treatment plants put in. One was put in at the head of the Yak Tunnel, to my knowledge after a lawsuit that was brought by Mark Udall’s wife when she was president of Sierra Club, to the LMDT that they had to start treating the water before discharging it. That was around late 1980s. In 1991, the LMDT plant began. Around 1983, we were a company town, over 3,000 people work up at Climax Mine, that was our latest and last producing mine, it still is a producing mine, but essentially the entire town worked there. And so when Climax closed substantially in 1983, it coincided with the timing of us being named Superfund site and it also coincided with mass exodus out of our community because overnight 3,000 people lost their jobs. It was very devastating, you hear horrible stories because people were so angry that the banks were taking their houses they were doing all kinds of sad things. Anyway, it was also the time the Leadville trail 100 footrace started. That was after they saw essentially the success of the Western States 100 running race, and thought we have something more challenging up here with our altitude. It started as a small thing to get people stay overnight because we all know that overnight stays generate far more income than day visits.

Well, I’ll walk through a little bit of Superfund timeline if you want. So in 1991 the LMDT treatment plant began. In 1992 the Yak water treatment plant began, however the owned
by Resurrection/Newmont/ASARCO. The paid for the construction of the plant, and they continue to pay for treatment of the plant. That’s why if you ever go there, you saw that awesome sign, no thanks to the government, they didn’t do anything for us.

We’ve always had a libertarian bent to community and so I think when the federal government stepped in and named all of residential Leadville as Superfund site, especially after everybody just lost their jobs, it was viewed as a pretty strong affront. It think a lot of folks viewed it as a value judgment, that the government was telling them that they are poisoning their children, that they must have grown up with lead poisoning, i.e. you’re not as smart as we are because you must have brain damage from living in this horrible wasteland. And there’s always been a sense of pride of our community, whether it was in the minerals that were produced, in the mountains, or just the hardiness you need to live in a place that can be frigid for a while.

In 1994 the site was divided into 12 operable units. That’s kind of key because the more discrete the units can be, the easier it is to address those specific problems. It wasn’t just lead; it was zinc, cadmium, and arsenic that were significantly contaminating our water. The first community that draws water out of there is Bueno Vista. And our water all surface water, not groundwater, and is in pools above the areas that were mined.

One of the things they did that was a terrible affront to our community was that Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment sent up, wanted to test people and their properties to try and figure out how bad contamination was in the residential areas. The public resisted. In fact, the Herald-Democrat had a cutout, you could cut out the sign that basically threatened EPA that if they came on your property that you would shoot them. Again I’ve been that told by several people, so it’s likely to be true, but who knows. In response to that, CDPHE and EPA said how can we compel people to get tested and they sent them what were called the brown letters, those were naming every residential homeowner as Potentially Responsible Party. These people who lost homes, lost a lot of their family, now have blight on property values and on their deeds, that they now lived in a Superfund site, were then told they were going to be sued by the state and federal government if they didn’t let these people in, and that turned the relationship even far worse.

The EPA did a community, what can help revitalize some of the economics. What’s something we can the community to start rebuilding this relationship. Like, Bill Yellowtail, the director of the EPA at the time, promised they’d be out by 1996, that was 13 years ago and we’re still a Superfund site, but obviously if you can’t test areas and you can’t put in remediations, it’s really hard to delist. They tried to address the root causes of contamination by getting the two water treatment plants into place and verifying they were running properly. They also consolidated and capped a whole bunch of mine piles. But did it in a way that made them (the caps) look very industrial, and not as I suppose quaint as our residents thought they were. They were called the wedding cakes, and after our community was infuriated about that, they came back and intermixed some different colored rocks. They thought that would help. That didn’t help. Then they went back and said what can we do, and the community said give us money. And they said, well, we can’t give money, but can potentially build something to help your economy. So they contributed to the construction of the Mineral Belt bike trail, 12-mile bike trail around town.

Now most of our residents, not being bicyclists, although Leadville home to the first bike group in Colorado, the Cloud City Wheelers. They were the first bike group that allowed women. We also had Father Dyer, who in the 1890s into the turn of the century used to deliver mail over
Mosquito Pass on skis. So they built a bike trail, most of community cynical and skeptical of it. That took five years and was completed in 2000.

In 2001, OU 10, one of the first OUs to be deleted, that was Oregon Gulch, that was near the Yak. In 2002, OU 2, California Gulch was deleted. In 2005, they did a remedial construction on OU 11, which was the Arkansas River floodplain, that area that had irrigated with contaminated water. That is now fully restored it looks like you would never in a million years be able to tell there was contamination there to start with.

In 2008, the Arkansas River ranked as most popular Colorado fishery, and they reached a $20.5 million natural resource damage settlement, called the ASARCO settlement.

In the meantime there were programs that were started like Kids First through EPA to provide yard remediations. So if you have a kid, they dug up your yard and gave you a new yard. Some folks liked that, but a lot of folks thought it was a horrible waste of money. They thought, yeah it’s federal money, but it’s my federal tax dollars that you’re using and wasting.

I became a commissioner in 2009 and right at that time, in beginning of 9, we transitioned Kids First to Lake County Community Health Plan Phase 2. And that is a blood lead testing program. The reality is, most children don’t get lead poisoning from eating the dirt in the yard. Granted some do, but not most. Most of them are getting it from lead paint, lead toys, lead candy, a dog that tracks it in from digging in the yard is another fairly common one. The kids are licking the toys the dog stepped on. But the great thing in my opinion, at this point we had about $5 million left in that trust. The full settlement, a lot of it went to other parties, a portion went to EPA, a portion of it went to CDPHE. So we were left with, I know it started with $8 million, once it transitioned from that yard remediation program to what we have know, which is a blood lead level testing program, it was only about $4.6 million. Then as a part of our requirements to delist certain OUs, especially OU 9, which is residential Leadville, we had to built a contaminated soils repository, and there was a lot of disagreement over where that should go, how it should be paid for. But essentially the trust or that settlement paid for that repository. One of our gracious landowners, the largest land owner in Lake County, a gentleman named Bob Elder, donated the land for that repository.

So with that in place, OU8 was deleted, lower California Gulch. OU9 deleted in 2011. Then in 2014, we deleted OUs 4, 5 and 7. We have a partial delisting of OU 3 at EPA headquarters desk, in their public comment period, awaiting passage.

So we’ve delisted roughly 70 percent of land area that was under Superfund. So I moved here in 2003 after visiting in 2002, there is a large cohort in my generation – people in 30s and 40s – that are moving to this area to raise their families. Mostly because of the great small community, as well as the access to recreation and outdoors and the natural environment.

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
   - If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
   - If such a document or documents exist, may have I copy of it?
5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

This is one of the main things I wanted to get it across in speaking with you, is it a part of your community’s cultural identity? What we’re talking about is not a cookie cutter solution that can be applied to different Superfund communities. It’s a matter of first, what does your community and its environment have to offer visitors? Is that in line with the residents and their identity? And is it a part of their creation story?

Let me jump into those. So we had the (Cloud City) Wheelers from 1800s. When Climax was in production in 1978, Lake County had the No. 1 school district (enrollment) in Colorado, which is somewhat unbelievable because a scant 10 years ago we were the third from lowest in state, which is horrifying. Nobody wants to move to a place where they will disadvantage their children. So before you get people to move there, I suppose, you have to highlight what’s there for them. You don’t want to do things that are against or for another group of people than what your local community or residents enjoy. So when Climax was in production and they were going full tilt, you could graduate with a high school degree and make the equivalent of $60,000 a year. And that’s what happened for generations, and they expected that to keep happening. So we still honor our mining heritage, but luckily it’s finally gotten through that mining isn’t something we can rely to be our savior. So if you get folks to open up that they need an alternate tax base, another way of saying that is you don’t want to tax them as much to offer them all the services that they want, and the way you can reduce their taxes is by generating other income through tourism.

I think honing in on the fact that skiing was one our prides. The first skier for the United States came from Climax ski hill. So skiing is in our modern creation story. It’s in our cultural identity, but you had to pick it out, you had remind folks of that and highlight it for them. Biking was a part of that. Obviously when the economy tanked in early 80s, we went through a 30-year period of a lot of poverty. With that major out-migration, with rents and houses were so cheap we also saw far more than a 100 percent increase in our Hispanic population. So we had the next round of immigrants, and Leadville has always had a reputation for abusing its newest immigrants, like many places. They were moving here to do the service industry jobs, so they weren’t making the money. Their children then grew up in poverty, and their children. We’re struggling with how do we uplift our community out of this? How do we get kids and keep them excited in more healthy alternatives, basically with outdoor recreation. How do we remind that them skiing, biking, and running are part of their current heritage. It’s like the story of democracy in Mongolia. Do you know how democracy got to Mongolia? The president was at Harvard Kennedy School of Business in the late 80s. He realized he needed to show people of Mongolia that democracy was part of their heritage, that it wasn’t an infused value from the West. So they brought their top poet laureate from Mongolia, and they sat down and made up a creation story of how democracy was truly created in Mongolia. And it was just something they were in the process of connecting with, and they went back and sold it to their people with some success. Anyway that’s a big side track.

Our community during that time of extreme poverty, obviously hunting and fishing, subsistence, things like that, they were not only enjoyment but necessity. They saw the affluence with our surrounding communities. We have such extremes – in the summertime when you drive over to Aspen, or you go to Breck, or Summit County, or over to Vail and Beaver Creek, I think what happened was an us and them mentality. Those are things that rich people do. Those aren’t what we do. So reminding them that those aren’t just for rich people. That bike trail is not to
bring rich tourists in, this is first and foremost for you and for your children. We used to have the
top cross county and downhill skiing teams in the state. To remind them, and those banners still
hang in our high school. It’s a little bit easier to sell to school-aged kids than to tell a 40-year-old
this is really a part of them and they just remember because they were three years old when it
went away.

We’ve been somewhat successful with doing that. I moved here in 03, and I was a teacher
for five years. I was fifth grade teacher and constantly heard from kids there was nothing to do. I
think part of it was they didn’t realize it and part of it was they hadn’t been brought up on going
skiing at our local ski area every weekend, and going out hiking and hunting and fishing. So
many of parents working in two jobs, the modern trap of life. So reminding them of that was
important.

We started building recreational amenities. We have a recreational advisory board, which
recommends new projects to the county. It’s not just recommendations, but we require that one
of them step up to be project driver, and that they have an extreme amount of grant funding to
leverage county in-kind dollars and or equipment and labor. After Mineral Belt trail in 2000. So
in 2003, maybe it was 2004, we opened back up our aquatic center, which had been closed since
the 90s because they couldn’t afford to upkeep it. Then we remediated a smelter site, and
rezoned it, and built a synthetic turf field because our kids couldn’t play soccer of football until it
all melted, which was essentially in May, so they were always behind the other teams because
they couldn’t practice. We added one playground, we redid another large-scale playground. I
grew up racing motocross. I saw we had a lot of motorized use here but it was not organized
whatsoever. So I recruited a set of volunteers – actually it had been attempted, and after the
meetings ended in things like fist fights and shouting matches – it, the county commissioners
said screw this, once they get their act together we’ll talk to them. So I went out and recruited the
specific people to form that committee, and formed nonprofit around motorized use and built
OHV park. And that was my show to those folks in the community that this wasn’t all for rich
Summit County and Eagle County people, but for their own kids. Then we opened up skate park,
that was another one of my projects. We redid the tennis courts. Added a dog park. Built a new
ice skating rink facility. And we just opened up our new free public shooting range. So a free
place to go shoot guns. And we kept the large-scale archery range next to our airport, which has
the motocross track and shooting range near it so all the noisy things are out together. Our
community has changed with those offerings. We consciously said, every time we add
something, it has to be something the community themselves is desirous of first, and then
secondary lens, will it promote tourism. And we did that and things like the skate park, we were
told no kids skate, they give you a formula for what size skate park your community should
build, and they told us ours should be about 5,000 square feet. We built a 23,000-square foot
poured concrete skate park because we did an amazing job with fundraising and we wanted it to
be not just a podunk park for kids, but something that would bring people here from other places.
The old park was called “Tetanus Park” because it had broken glass and metal, broken beer
bottles and everything all over all the time. The community would say, most folks would say,
that our kids have a lot more options now. That we’ve tried to honor what they view as their
heritage of hunting and fishing, but also with the opportunities to recreate close by their schools,
close by their community. We did this with the community’s desires in mind first and with
tourism secondary.
I think there was more backlash to Mineral Belt trail because it was less of something that the community voted on, well not voted on because they didn’t actually vote on it, but something where hey, we’ll offer you x, y, and z, which of those do you like, versus what do you want.

Now, we bought two groomers. So in the winter time, the snowmobilers used to hate the cross country skiers and vice versa, and now we’ve formed partnerships with the snowmobile club and now they groom 40 miles of our unpaved county roads during the winter for multi-use. So everything is very clear, it’s for snowmobilers and skiers and dog walkers, snowshoers, etc. And the skiers and dog walkers in particular are the major beneficiaries. And they’re super stoked about it. They have been really appreciative and it has smoothed the divide between the two user groups. Before everybody on a dirt bike considered an outlaw and so they would just run from the cops. And you would see high speed chases in the stupidest of places. We Legalized OHVs on county roads as long as they had a driver’s license, insurance, and were obeying the laws of the road. And that helped, in my opinion, to show the community, hey, these are things you’ve asked you and you’ve told us you appreciate and like, and so we’re going to try to create policies and facilities around those. And I feel like we’ve brought the community with us to this point.

The other thing is, our visitors want to know – can I drink the water here? Can my kids crawl on the ground? Is it safe? Is there lead? Chunks of arsenic? I think the other way of going to a research-based, data-based program that our blood lead program is, has helped. We investigate to find a source and then we remediate just that source. I think folks we see that as a wiser use of their money. And they we can also tell the visitors with a straight face, we have remediated these things. Our gold-medal designation of the Arkansas River from a cesspool in 1989 is such a dramatic turnaround to show we have actually taken the steps to clean up the environment to mitigate risk. Risk still exists but you have to go looking for it at this point.

We used to have to have mediated meetings every time we sat down (with the EPA). Oh, these people have friends who are contractors, or they’re not doing it. So show us the science. The EPA of all people and the Montana Department of Health should love to show you the science.

The other thing is, there are ways to honor our heritage. On Mineral Belt Trail, it tells the story of our mining heritage. It’s not just a bike trail. Every quarter to half mile, there’s a place to stop and learn about the mining history and about how this community contributed to the nation’s success. And I think you can still honor people and their ancestors’ contributions to that. If there is skepticism about are these remedies actually working, some of them probably aren’t. EPA has trouble being bluntly honest because they’re such bureaucracy and there’s so many repercussions going up to Washington and back.

And we just met with Animas River folks, with San Juan and LaPlatte counties, they’re considering a Superfund designation. LaPlatta came at us guns ablazing, tell us how you beat the EPA, how you told those bastards to get out of town. And I’ll tell you what, if you look at our timeline, from 1983 to 2008, we delisted two operable units. So that was 25 years of fighting. In 25 years of fighting we got two areas taken off of Superfund. In seven years of working together, we have delisted 50 percent of the entire area. So to me it’s so clear, I don’t want to use Ronald Reagan expressions, that you have to have some basis of trust in the relationship, but also it’s well within your right to say show me the data, I will trust you, but so me how the remedy is actually working. Even if it’s a one-year, three-year result. Because you have to have the community come along with you. It’s kind of like a battle of attrition here. It’s been going on so long that people don’t even come. I had a meeting with EPA this morning, and not a single
member of the public came. People don’t care so much anymore. When I moved here 13 years ago, I moved from Superfund community outside Philadelphia. Every single one of neighbors growing up has cancer or has died of cancer. So Superfund is not the stigma I think some would have you believe, in my opinion that is. When it’s fresh, oh my gosh what a horrible stigma. But once you have mitigated what the major threats are, like I moved here with the express purpose having a family and raising my children here. Had I had any concern there we being exposed to contamination, I wouldn’t have come here. But I didn’t even find out it was a Superfund site until years after I moved here, and most of my friends are the same way. They thought, we don’t want to live in the city, but want to have access to some amenities like a decent airport. I think Summit County was important in weaning my wife away from suburbia.

I think people will continue to come to those places because of amazing natural environment where you can find the things that appease the community and invite tourists. You’re not going to get the shoe-be who’s coming on a tour bus to Butte. The thing that struck me about Butte – I could live here, but I know my wife can’t. I know she was going to have trouble adjusting to how rural it was and how homogenous the community was. We liked that we had a lot of Hispanic folks here, some Native Americans. Brilliant people and idiots. Stoners and uptight people and ultra-athletes. We have a great mix of eclectic people here. And it makes for an interesting town.

Carl Miller, one the county commissioners when we were named a Superfund site in 1983. He still hates EPA’s guts so vehemently that wishes them all dead every day. And there is a group of folks like Carl in our community that still hate them, that still want to fight them tooth and nail no matter what. Sometimes institutional memory can be a bad thing. Sometimes you need to have new people. And I’m not saying folks like Carl should die, but as they are dying off, you’re seeing a changing mentality from our community, especially from our kids and grandkids who didn’t feel that vehement nature, but are like yeah, we don’t want Superfund, so how can we get rid of it. Well, telling them to go away didn’t work for 25 years. So how can we actually do something that will allow them to leave. Because most of those folks don’t enjoy being whipping posts either. The community certainly felt like one. Had you interviewed the person sitting in my chair 20 years ago, they’d tell you a 180 degrees different. How much they hate the EPA, how horrible they are, how they’re all liars, etc. Some of it is the evolution of different people in these positions on the EPA, the public health side, the county, and local and state government side too.

The other thing about we held meeting about the Animas River spill – our neighbors in Summit County, our neighbors in Pitkin County, aka Aspen, you know this, they have the ability to pay for Superfund cleanup out of their own money. Summit County voters voted to increase their property taxes to cleanup mines near Montezuma that were contaminating their rivers. That’s certainly not all of them. Aspen ski mountain has mine dumps all over it. But my point to those guys was hey, if you can afford to cleanup without EPA and the public health department of the state, go ahead and do it. You don’t have to become Superfund site. But if you’re poor, like Leadville and Butte, I’m assuming from seeing it, you need help, because you can’t do it yourself. If you put an initiative to clean up mines it would be laughed off the ballot. People have a hundred other things they’d rather spend money on. And so, for us it was a relationship of necessity. I’m thankful to come along at this point. Had I come and seen my political leaders screaming at people, having fistfights over these topics, I might not have moved here. It wouldn’t have been the small, knit community I want to be in. I want to be in one where we can have a discussion and exchange diverse ideas and not have it lead to physical violence. And even if I’m
OK with that, I don’t want my kids growing up in that mentality. We’ve come about 25 years in the last 10. People who have not been here lately and come back notice the differences.

An interesting stat, one-third of all of our homes owned by second home owners. In 2015, over 60 percent of all homes sold were to second-home owners. So our savior or demise the tidal wave of people coming from Denver. I say that because we’ll see how it plays out in 20 more years. We just finished new comprehensive plan, we’re updating our development code, we’re dealing with short-term rentals and dwelling units and we’re trying to plan this well as we can so we can end up with future we’re desirous of. Our residents have long been able to articulate what they don’t want to be but have extreme difficulty tell you where they want to end up. They say, I don’t want to be Summit County. But they send their kids to Summit County schools. And they go shopping in Summit County. And they go to the doctor in Summit County. So what that tells you is they want those services, but they don’t want commercialization that comes with economies of scale necessary to offer those services. To me the solution is, my god, Trail 100.

Trail 100 is an interesting beast because it has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. I did it twice in the early- and mid-2000s. And when I did it, it was like 500 people. Now it’s 2,000 people and 4,000 spectators. Exclusivity and cost have gone through the roof. Used to be manned by local volunteers. It doubles the size of the town for the weekend. Since it was sold to Lifetime Fitness, the exclusivity and cost and levels of affluence have gone through the roof. So the Trail 100 used to be manned by all local volunteers, everybody in the community would volunteer, help, come out. And now there’s a sizable resentment that “they” are coming to “our” town and taking it over for the weekend. And to me, I say, yeah that kind of stinks you’re inconvenienced and you have to wait an extra minute at the stop light or whatever, but that’s the tradeoff for not having 100,000 people in your town on the weekend like they do in Summit County. I would much rather have short, intense impact such as these major events, than to have, and I love second hand homeowners because they pay same taxes and use third of services, but the fear with that is are they going to gentrify our community, will they price out our locals like they did in Summit and Eagle and Pitkin. We see this example all around us and there’s not many other places for our residents to go. So that’s one of their lingering fears. Yeah, it’s great to see economic development. We’ve been putting over 100 grand a year into our economic development corp from the county, because we know when mine closes the next time, we damn well better have a secondary tax base. Even though recreation and tourism are often talked about, they equate to a much, much smaller portion of our economic impact. Households equate to 33 percent when compared to roughly 12-14 percent from outdoor recreation. So it’s really how do you get second homeowners to leave more money when coming and going? In my mind.

There are 167 100-mile running races in U.S. We were the 2nd.

For Butte, that’s awesome. You’ll see one in Bozeman, in Missoula. But you know, Butte has the attraction I think for those folks similar to the people who come to Leadville over Summit County. They want something more authentic, a little grittier, less discovered and I think those are the angle that could be worked more in concert with the community’s own pride in itself than in something that may not as…

That’s the other thing, the Californians are coming. Butte offers quality of life like Leadville does.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?
8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?
   • What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
   • Is there a document I could have a copy of?
9. Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?
10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
    • Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
    • Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?
11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?

   Our Chamber of Commerce has started keeping their visitor stats. I don’t think it’s 10 years. They could tell you anecdotally going back further. Tourism continues to be on a near exponential increase every year. It used to be August, then it was July, now it’s the second half of June, all of July and August, and the first half of September, we’re pretty packed on the weekends with tourists. We’re being discovered. We were in Outside magazine last summer as “your adventure basecamp”. We’ve done better with tourism marketing and promotion. The chair of our tourism panel that markets community with use of lodging tax dollars. We’ve done a much better job of marketing ourselves and tourism is increasing. But Denver second home owners. I have them all around me. It’s cool, my next door neighbors are both Harvard Medical School-trained doctors, so I’m glad my kids get to play with multi-generational destitute impoverished kids, and Hispanic kids, and kids that have every expectation of going to Ivy League schools and everybody in between. I love that diversity so my kids don’t think “We are this type of person. We only do this, we only associate with this type of person.” That’s one of the reasons I moved here. I looked at Crested Butte and Nederland. Crested Butte was homogenous and 20 years too late, and Nederland didn’t have a community and it was overrun by Boulder-ites every weekend. I have my own secret places. We have the lowest cost ski area in Colorado. That’s pretty huge for us. Ski Cooper. I can afford, as somebody who doesn’t even make 50 grand, to have full ski passes, I take my kids skiing every single weekend, I own two houses. Granted, when I was a teacher and all I would do is gut and clean up houses all summer and that’s how I was able to save up money to buy, but it’s allowed us to get ahead. We feel like we’re advancing in life, not just treading water. I think that’s the kind of opportunity most people want, if not all. And likewise, here’s a funny story. I just bought a new used car. My first job out of college was at Mercedes import specialist. The thing that led me to choose the Passat over the Mercedes, I could afford to fix it, and b, if I was ever broken down on the side of the road, if people saw me in or near a Mercedes they would never stop to help me. I’d be that rich asshole who got what he deserved. Even if they saw it was me, I have a lot of friends in this community. It may be backwards, but that’s not a factor in thinking. Because money doesn’t impress and in fact money turns off people here.

12. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
Tell me about the Superfund site in your community. How old is it?

Everybody who lived in Leadville got involved in it in 1984 when the dam broke and all the bad water went down the Arkansas River. Then we became a superfund site after that. They made everyone in Leadville who owned property a responsible party. And, as a result, it means they all thought they were going to get sued for being a potential responsible party. Well anyway, as it ensued, there was a lot of people upset of course because they didn’t want to have to pay up money. Everybody was against the EPA. There was a lot of different meetings and a lot of people getting very angry. I got involved after I became the assessor in 1993, because of all of the goings-on. I actually got involved a little before then, about 1990. The way I got involved then before I was assessor, I worked at the Climax Molybdenum Company in management/metallurgy for 34 years, right after I got out of college. Then I retired from that, and went to work as county assessor, worked there for 21 years. But after Climax, whenever the Superfund thing came along, I got involved because they asked me if I would belong a particular group called the Lake County Liaison Committee. The purpose not to run the EPA out of Leadville like everyone else wanted to do, but to get something useful from the EPA. And so that was our goal.

There was like 7 or 8 of us in that group, and we’d meet once a week. We decided that each of us would go home and come up with something we’d like to see in Leadville. So, when we come back there was eight different ideas. One was a bobsled run from top of Mosquito Range in Park County down into Leadville, down the old trail. Another one was to put a water park in California Gulch, a water park to show our water was cleaned up. Another one was to make a clear area and build a building for training athletes in high altitude. We’re at 10,200 feet above sea level. Another idea, I wanted to save the mining district. My great-grandfather came here in 1879, and we’ve been connected to mining since then, my dad and my grandpa and my great-grandpa. So anyway I wanted to save the mining district. I was afraid they’d haul away the tailings, the old buildings and what was left of the mining district. I had two things. Another was to build a bike trail. At that time biking was getting important in Leadville. So we come back to the meeting with all these crazy ideas, some of them were really crazy. We put them all together and said, well, let’s do this. At that time Leadville was getting a daily newspaper, now it’s only weekly, but at that time it was daily. So we decided we would go to Smith Lumber Co. and we would build these miniature wishing wells, and I think we built five of them. And we put them
around town at different places like the grocery store, the post office, the courthouse, where a lot of the population would be around. And we made a little ballot sheet we put in the newspaper, and it had all of these ideas, so people would vote on these ideas. We let that go for several weeks, and we had a whole bunch of neat ideas, some others than the ones we came up with before. The ones that got the most votes was number one, save the mining district, and number two, build a bike trail. So we thought, well, let’s put a bike trail in the mining district. So we thought that’s a good idea. Went to the country and talked to the co commissioners about it, they thought it was a good idea and they got behind it. At that time I was the assessor, took the responsibility of notifying all the property owners to get easements along this trail. It turned out to be an 11.6-mile trail that goes through the mining district and loops around into Leadville again. A lot of bike trails will go one way and then you turn around and come back the same way. Well, this one makes a big loop. You start out and go up into the mining district and come back into Leadville again, and go on the outskirts of Leadville where you go right by the school, the library, and the business district, and then back into the loop where you started again. So anyway, the thing became extremely popular and we got quite a few grants. We put up a lot of historical signs, pictures of the mine as it was back in the day and the whole story of it. I think we’ve got six different kiosks with different historical mention on them. And we’ve got 22 low profile wayside exhibits, some little narrative signs. Plus we’ve got a lot of antique mining equipment scattered around the trail with an explanation of what they did. It became a great success. There was opposition in the beginning from people who thought we were going to use the old railroad beds where they were used to hiking and they think they owned them, or that nobody else would never be on them. And we had opposition from the snowmobile people who thought we’d take away their snowmobile trails, but we got through all that. And there was a 100 times that everybody just wanted to quit. In fact only about three of us stayed with it to the end. The other four or five had finally given up, went somewhere else, didn’t want to fight the battle, but it turned out none was major opposition. It was again squeaking wheel. For instance, we paved it, and there was some guys living in a subdivision that didn’t have any pavement on their roads. But after it was all said and done, some of the people who argued the most were some of the biggest users of it and were happy that we did it. And it does bring in a lot of people.

EPA has been here so many years that all the old people have died or moved away or just given up on the opposition. It’s become like well, the EPA was here when I moved here and still is here. And it has provided a living to several lawyers from the time they got out of law school ‘til they retired. Has it done any good? It has. In retrospect it has done some good. They helped us on parts of the Mineral Belt Trail. They did some in-kind work and that was great. It has also cleaned up the river so now it’s a blue-ribbon fishery. It’s one of the better fly-fishing in the state now, the Arkansas River, where before it wasn’t. They cleaned the river up. I collect old pictures of Leadville and California Gulch back in the 1880s up into the 1920s, it was just a mess, the yellow water, the mine dumps, the tailings all through the gullies. Now it’s all cleaned up. Now there’s things down there. We have a Dutch Henry ski area, there’s tubing and skiing, and the bike trail goes through there also. Now we have businesses in the gulch, quite a few them, that built nice buildings.

2. How did the community react to the listing as a Superfund site? Was it controversial to see it listed? Is it still listed or has it been “completed”?

When it was listed as a Superfund, the reaction was bad. Really bad. There were people having parades against the EPA, get them out of town, get them out of here. There was meetings to go to, and man, I tell you what, the sheriff would be in the meeting just in case. People would
get very upset. But then they got a new manager. The original manager was very ornery, very aggressive. Got a new person in and they calmed people down quite a bit, then they found out they were not going to be potentially responsible parties, PRPs. Only a couple big mine owners had to pay any money. But then these guys made it back because when EPA was doing reclamation work, these guys started up a quarry and provided rocks so they came out money ahead. Nobody really got stung over the whole thing as it ended up. You come to town, it was there when you got there, you just accepted it.

As assessor, in the beginning years, I started in 1993, things started looking better in 1996, 97, 98. People were afraid to come to Leadville. Some of the people out of Denver, from the state appraisal office would come up to monitor what we were doing. They wouldn’t drink the water in the cafes. They were afraid of it. A lot of people were like that. We’ve probably got the most pure water in the world up here. People are afraid of the Superfund stigma. Actually, we probably lost out when mining was making a comeback, when they were running the old dumps, and picking gold and silver out of them The big mines were leery of coming to Leadville, didn’t want to come to Leadville and become a Potentially Responsible Party and pay a lot of money. And I heard some people didn’t want to move up here. But that’s not the story anymore. We’re still a Superfund site. But right now it’s a seller’s market. You can’t hardly find a place that you can buy right now. Only 20 houses on the MLS right now.

3. Do you believe there is or has been negative perception of your community because of the Superfund site?

4. What kind of specific outlined plan does/did your community have to address Superfund stigma following the closure of the mine/nuclear plant/paper mill?
   - If there isn’t or wasn’t a plan, is/was there an ad hoc committee, quasi-governmental agency, advisory or study committee, or chamber of commerce that spearheaded the effort? How were stakeholders involved?
   - If such a document or documents exist, may I copy of it?

5. Is outdoor recreation a value of the community? Was giving residents and visitors of the community access to outdoor recreation a goal?

Well first off the climax mine was the most major molybdenum mine in the world for years. In 1982 they closed down. Molybdenum was so valuable at the time and the price per pound so high. I was on management, in charge of the crusher. We were under the gun to make as much molybdenum as possible. It became such a valuable metal, all these copper mines that had molybdenum as a byproduct, they put in circuits to pick it up. It wasn’t worth it earlier, they let the moly go to their tailings ponds. So many of them did it, they outbid Climax, they could sell molybdenum at a lower price than for what we were selling it for at Climax. Our mill was a 1920s mill, we just kept adding on to it, it scattered all over the mountain. Ball mills here, and ball mills there. We could not compete anymore and that was one reason we went down. It was costing us more dollars per pound to produce it than we could sell it for. So we shut down. We had 3,000 employees. That took a big chunk out of the Leadville economy. At that time there was about 9,000 people in the community. Everybody’s houses for sale. The miners stay true to mining, they’re gonna move to Nevada or Montana or wherever there’s mining. So the houses were selling pretty cheap. The assessed value was clear down to $35 million. Leadville was really hurting.

A guy comes along, he was an old Climax employee, and he was athletic. He started 100 mile foot race. Now, that thing has developed, and it takes up most of the summer. They have
practice sessions before the 100-mile race. They have a 50-mile race. They have a 100-mile bike race. They have practice for that. It takes up most of the summer and brings in a lot of economy.

In my experience, about 1999, 2000, 2001, all of sudden you see a lot of new young people coming into town. You get to know them, being in the assessors office, and you find out these people have masters, PhDs, bachelors, they’re educated people, and they’re young, in their 20s, 30s, and they have young families, and they’re working at cheap jobs, they not making much money, but they’re here for the mountains. We’ve got a lot of 14,000-foot peaks right here. They’re here for the 14ers, for the clear clean air, the clean water, and for all the recreation, and a good place to raise their kids. They’re really the backbone of our community now. Recreation has taken over mining. Climax Mine spent a billion dollars up there redoing this mine, and it’s start of the art, so they’re running again. Now they don’t need 3,000 employees, they’re doing it with less than 500. They don’t have as many employees, but the mine is running and that’s a help. So we have a diversified economy, we’ve got mining and a lot of recreation.

6. What about the environment around or in your town is attractive to outdoor recreationists? Are there specific activities such as but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, or fishing?

We have these survey stations on the trail. We ask a lot of different questions. Finally got so many we didn’t do it anymore. We brought people in from around the country and the world. They didn’t come here from that, but they were in the area and they used it. We also use it in winter time, we have a lot of cross country skiing up here. We have a lope-it, a ski race in February, fashioned after the Berky Binder, a ski race back in Wisconsin and the Lope-it in the Scandinavian countries. That’s where Lope-It originated. We have a 10k, a 22k, and 44k ski race. We get almost 200 people every year at that. A lot of townsfolk will contribute by making soups and chilis, and offer during award ceremonies. We have a 5k run, a lot of little kids put on costumes. It brings money into Leadville in the winter time, also. To motels and things. It has been very worthwhile.

7. Is the recreation site on top of the Superfund site or near it?

It is. The Superfund site isn’t the whole country. But I’ll tell you what has happened in the Superfund site, it is in the mining district. It has become a green space for these young people. They’re taking some of the old mining trails and they’re using them for their bikes. They’re running their mountain bikes, having races, doing a lot of stuff up there. In a lot of ways they’re trespassing on the mining claims. It has become quite the recreational area. Outside the Superfund site, there’s some 72 percent Forest Service-owned land. It’s what do you call it, you can’t drive up there, all you can do is walk. Wilderness areas. Most of our forest service is wilderness areas. We’re called Lake County, we have a lot of high mountain lakes. One of my favorite things.

8. Has there been an organized, concerted effort to change the way the town is perceived by outsiders?

- What was the timeline of this effort? Who were the key players?
- Is there a document I could have a copy of?

The Chamber of Commerce, yeah, they’re pushing everything all the time. I don’t think they’re really saying hey, we’re a Superfund site, but we’ve got all this. I don’t hear much mention of a Superfund site publically. They’re pushing the recreation.

9. Is/was promoting your town’s access to outdoor recreation a specific goal of the aforementioned plan?
Oh definitely. Yeah, it is. This Lifetime Fitness that took over the 100-mile races, they’re pushing this thing world-wide. They get a lot, they get thousands that want to do this, they turn a lot of people away. They have to qualify in order to get in the race.

10. Have you seen an increase in tourism following the aforementioned plan to change the way the town is perceived?
   - Does your chamber of commerce or the county have actual tourism numbers before and after your community began its campaign? Was there a change after the listing? Was there a change (increase/decrease/or no change) after the plan was implemented?
   - Why do you think there has been an increase (or not)?

There’s a lot of people coming up for these races. In summertime, the town is full. They have to go to Chaffee County and over to Eagle and Summit to find a place to stay. But there’s a group, you’ve always got the squeaking wheel, there’s a group that’s saying they’re keeping the normal tourists away, because they don’t want to come up here, the whole town’s closed down every weekend. They’re not going to go shopping in the stores. These racers don’t go to the stores. They just come up here and race and they go home. But they take up the whole town. There’s a fringe group that is claiming that. But there’s no way logically when you’ve got a thousand racers plus their families up here, the family is going to be hanging around Leadville while the guy is out all night long racing his bike. It’s definitely helping.

Cara Russell. At the Chamber

11. What kinds of print or digital materials does your community have to entice tourists to visit the community?
   - Mineral belt trail has a brochure. Will mail.
   - May I have a copy of these materials?
   - How were these materials developed?
   - How were these materials distributed?

12. Can I follow up with you if I have more questions?

13. Can you think of someone else who has this kind of information or an interesting perspective I should speak to?

719-293-4822 – cell phone
Signature Page

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Kelley J.H. Christensen titled “Beyond Superfund: How Four Communities Are Marketing Outdoor Recreation To Overcome Stigma” has been examined and approved for acceptance by the Department of Technical Communication, Montana Tech of The University of Montana, on this day the 18th of April, 2016.

Karen Sorensen, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Technical Communication
Chair, Examination Committee

Kay Eccleston, MSTC, Instructor II
Department of Technical Communication
Member, Examination Committee

Michael Masters, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Liberal Studies
Member, Examination Committee