

What's Mined is Yours

Protecting Oregon's wildlands and waters by reforming the 1872 Mining Law

In 1872 the state of Oregon was only 13 years old, our population topped out at 90,000, and the first automobile to hit Oregon streets was still over a decade away. In Washington D.C., Congress was putting the finishing touches on the 1872 Mining Act – a law that would govern the extraction of minerals from public lands.

In over a century since that time Oregon – and the West – has changed. The 1872 Mining Law has not.

Written in an era when the primary tools of the mining trade were pick axes and mules, U.S. mining laws

are in need of fundamental reform. Major flaws of the 1872 General Mining Law include: treating mining as the “highest and best use” of most federal lands without regard for recreation and wildlife habitat; giving away valuable mineral resources without any royalties; and failing to protect water quality.

Congress must move to update this antiquated law by ensuring proper protections for sensitive waters and wildlands while fairly compensating taxpayers for resources extracted.

“...mineral processing and mining sectors generate more wastes that are corrosive or contain toxic metals than any other industrial sector.” - EPA

Mining: A threat to Oregon's wildlands

Oregon's Yellowstone under fire

Nowhere is the mining threat more concentrated than in the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area of southwest Oregon. Host to world-renowned biological diversity and salmon strongholds like the Chetco and Illinois rivers, mining in this unique corner of Oregon is fraught with potential disaster.

In 2001, President Clinton proposed a mining withdrawal for the Siskiyou Wild Rivers. The mining moratorium was reversed under the Bush administration and since 2001 over 800 mining claims have been filed in the area. A recently passed law banning suction dredge mining in California is expected to only make the problem worse by shifting the harmful practice to southern Oregon rivers.



U.S. Army Corps

Suction dredge mining equipment vacuums gravel from river bottoms disturbing important salmon spawning grounds

How to update our mining laws

- End metal mining's priority status on public lands
- Close certain sensitive areas and special places to new claimstaking
- Treat hardrock mining like other extractive industries by requiring payment of royalties
- Keep public lands in public hands with permanent prohibition of "patenting" or forced land sale
- Protect public lands and waters by requiring comprehensive and thorough review of mine operations

Reform Mining Now!

Our mining laws are in need of fundamental reform. We can start by reinstating a mining moratorium for special areas like the Siskiyou Wild Rivers.

• **Contact** your elected officials and urge them to support a mining withdrawal for Oregon's Yellowstone!

Senator Wyden (503) 326-7525
 Senator Merkley (503) 326-3386
 Rep. DeFazio (541) 465-6732

• **Join** Oregon Wild and help protect the wildlife, wildlands, and water that make our state special.

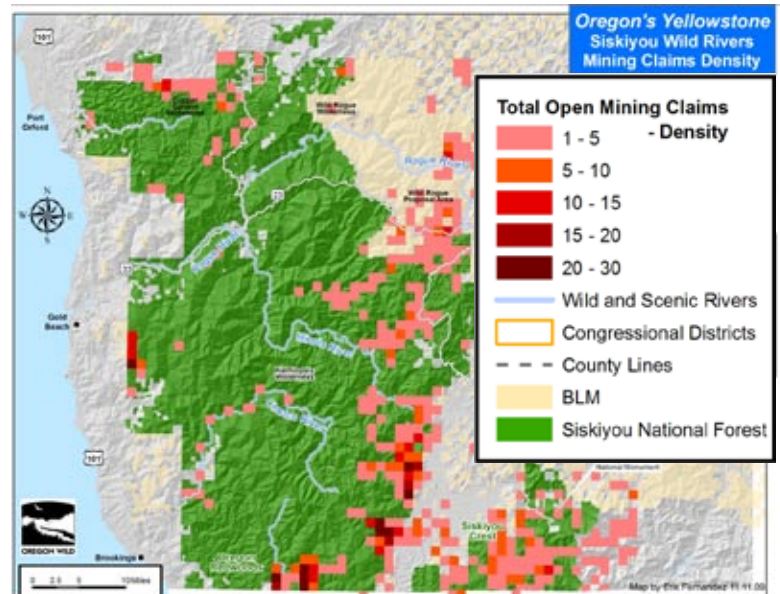
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Siskiyou Project