

Forest Services land should be land that is preserved as habitat for local ecosystems and recreation. Industry should not equate to racing to the bottom of all of our resources before another company comes in to take part in the resource. Our forests are dwindling and industry is not slowing down on the scarce, non-renewable resources. We are entering into a tragedy of the commons when resources are being sought on federal lands rather than privately owned lands. Mining, no matter how small, affects the surrounding area aside from the reclamation that takes place in the conclusion of mining. The proposed changes in regulation seem quite ambiguous considering that the regulations would be “less burdensome” and also bear greater discipline and accountability for the protection of the environment. What is the actual purpose of the change? Is it to make it easier to mine for these minerals or is it to bear greater protection on our environment?

I do not believe that any mining should take place on federal forestry land. However, if mining does take place, it should be minimal, with limited terms, and the process for obtaining the permit to mine should require at the very least a complete proposed plan of operations that includes how the natural resources, including wildlife, water, and timber that are all enjoyed by the citizens, will be protected, along with a full reclamation plan that will leave the entire area in a state near to what it was before mining commenced. Further, I believe a yearly inspection by an uninterested third party that all protections and reports are being reviewed sufficiently should take place. A yearly/bi-yearly review of all permits should occur and all reports from the operator are easily obtained by the public through the permitting agencies. I believe the public should have the opportunity to object to the operations by informal and formal conferences.

The Forest Service should be preserving federal land for future generations. The government should not attempt to mine all of the non-renewable resources available to leave nothing for our future generations. Mining should take place on privately owned lands that will still not harm our aquifers, surface waters, or fragile ecosystems.