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Comments:

I vehemently oppose any changes to the locatable minerals document as proposed. Some say the 1872 mining act should be repealed because it is old but my personal feeling is it has worked for many years even though it is old. I say leave it alone as it works just fine. Get the Forest Service out of the small miners locatable minerals oversight and ensure their resources are allocated to wood and grasses. The USFS (United States FOREST Service) is tasked with managing THE FOREST. It has no business regulating mineral locations. That authority rests with the BLM. The BLM has plenty of regulations and policies and does not require duplicate oversight by another agency. There are too many regulating agencies governing the single activity of mining. Miners should have only ONE agency to deal with when it comes to regulations, approvals, permits, etc. The Forest Service has two responsibilities. (1) Maintain a steady supply of wood products for our nation and (2) Prevent forest fires and undue degradation to the nations forest reserves which they havent done a good job at either. If the Forest Service is to be in the small miners locatable minerals then they should have to work off of scientific evidence instead of someones belief that miners are doing harm. The USFS should have to provide the scientific evidence of significant disturbance created by small scale dredging. Better yet, lets get the USFS out of mineral management. It is my honest opinion that current USFS regulations and proposed changes warrant a reset of USFS oversight which may include turning oversight of mineral extraction on all USFS managed land over to the BLM. It is my understanding that in 1974 no Plan of Operation was required for suction dredging because the USFS view was that it did not create a significant disturbance. This is the same activity, suction dredging, as well as, high bankers, sluices, panning etc., with two completely different outcomes. The only reason for the difference is the USFS personnels interpretation of USFS regulations. These incorrect interpretations are occurring because USFS has no nation-wide training directing USFS staff to consistently interpret regulations. I feel that any Forest Service employee dealing with the miners should have to have been a miner their self for several years prior to being able to make any interpretations of the regulations. The USFS also has the habit of closing roads which grant access to public land. This not only restricts miners from accessing their claims, but also restricts other forms of recreation such as hunting and fishing, especially for people with disabilities or who cannot walk miles to gain access to public land. Gates should NEVER be locked. Post a sign that states the reason travel is not advised and to enter at your own risk. By closing roads and locking gates, the USFS is in violation by "materially interfering with a mining operation" as well as restricting public access to public land. Please put me on the list to receive all changes on this proposal as well as the proposed in this matter. Thank You