



## **Idaho Can Have It All** *Mining, Recreation, Tourism and other Important Land Uses*



***Idaho, the Gem State, is known for its many treasures - scenic beauty, wildlife, forests, rivers, famous potatoes, and abundant mineral resources. These treasures make Idaho a special place to live, work, and play.***



### **Federal Multiple Use Laws Require Balancing Diverse Land Uses**

The federal laws and regulations governing resource use and development on federal lands administered by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) require balancing interests so the lands can be used for more than one purpose. The Forest Service's and BLM's multiple land use principles mean mining, livestock grazing, timber harvesting, recreation, and other uses can coexist in a general area. Once mining is completed, federal and Idaho State reclamation laws require closure and reclamation measures to create reclaimed landscapes that can be repurposed for other post-mining uses consistent with multiple use mandates.

### **Mining and Recreation are Compatible Uses of Federal Lands**

Outdoor recreation is an important land use in Idaho. Multiple use mandates mean Idahoans and tourists can use and enjoy the State's beautiful scenery and take advantage of its rugged mountains and clear rivers and streams for unparalleled recreational opportunities. At the same time, Idaho can benefit from the jobs and state and local tax revenues that mining projects create.

Recreation activities currently occur near lands being used for mining in many western states. In fact, active mine sites can even attract tourism. For example, mining companies in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, Utah, and Wisconsin offer public tours of their operations or feature mining observation platforms and museums.



### **Mining Affects Very Little Land in Idaho**

BLM's statistics show at the end of Fiscal Year 2017, there were 17,165 active unpatented mining claims on federal lands in Idaho, covering 378,113 acres. This is less than one percent of the State's surface area (53.5 million acres) and just 1.2 percent of the federal land in Idaho (33 million acres.) The small amount of federal land in Idaho currently held as unpatented mining claims means that actual on-the-ground conflicts with other land uses will be rare, localized, and will not involve large tracts of land. If there are competing land uses at a proposed mining project, federal laws require the mine to be built and operated in ways to minimize those conflicts.



## Federal Regulations Require Mining Operations to Minimize Impacts

The Forest Service Organic Act of 1897, the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960, its surface management regulations (36 CFR Subpart 228A), and BLM's Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and its surface management regulations (43 CFR Part 3809) establish multiple use objectives that include supporting mineral development and include stringent environmental protection and reclamation requirements to minimize impacts due to mining. These laws and regulations require the Forest Service and BLM to manage federal lands in ways that support production of the Nation's minerals, timber, and forage for livestock; to protect water quality, wildlife habitats, cultural resources, and scenic landscapes; and to accommodate outdoor recreation.

The Forest Service's and BLM's multiple use land management mandates put a diverse group of land uses including outdoor recreation and mining on equal footing. Both agencies' surface management regulations require mineral exploration and development to be conducted in an environmentally sensitive manner to minimize adverse environmental impacts in the National Forests and to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of BLM-administered lands.



The Forest Service Mineral Policy Program states *"the National Forests have an essential role in contributing to an adequate and stable supply of mineral and energy resources while continuing to sustain the land's productivity for other uses and its capability to support biodiversity goals."* The Mineral Policy Program also establishes that *"exploration, development and production of mineral and energy resources and reclamation activities are part of the Forest Service ecosystem management responsibility...to provide commodities for current and future generations commensurate with the need to sustain the long-term health and biological diversity of ecosystems."*

The federal National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires the Forest Service and BLM to prepare Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments to evaluate the impacts associated with a proposed project and identify reasonable project alternatives that could avoid, minimize, or eliminate those impacts. The agencies use the information presented in a NEPA document to evaluate whether a proposed project prevents adverse environmental impacts and unnecessary or undue degradation. During the NEPA process, the agencies must seek and respond to public comments on proposed projects.



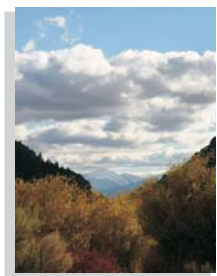
## Idaho Has Stringent Environmental Protection and Reclamation Regulations for Mining

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) implement regulatory programs governing the operation, closure, and reclamation of Idaho mining projects on federal, private and state lands. These regulations provide effective and comprehensive environmental protection and establish site-specific financial assurance requirements on a project-by-project basis. Idaho mining and mineral processing facilities must comply with Idaho's stringent antidegradation policy to protect existing and designated beneficial uses of surface waters.



## Idaho Has Minerals Important for Renewable Energy Objectives

Idaho has minerals essential to renewable energy including: gold, which is used in the electronics and computer chips that are an integral part of renewable energy technologies; silver, which is needed to manufacture solar panels; cobalt, which is an important component of storage batteries; and copper and molybdenum, which are needed for electronic products and electric vehicles. Development of these minerals from Idaho's federal and private lands can help advance renewable energy development and reduce the country's reliance on imported minerals.



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