

THE SIERRA FUND'S SIERRA NEVADA MINING'S TOXIC LEGACY INITIATIVE

What happened?

Millions of pounds of mercury and millions of tons of waste rock containing arsenic and lead were distributed as a result of mining activities.



The Sierra Nevada is California's headwaters and the source of 60% of the state's drinking water. Consequently, contaminated sediments from mining threaten the water, plants and people of the entire state.

Mercury, arsenic, asbestos and lead are known to cause severe human health problems with continued exposure including cancer and impaired development. The presence of these toxins is well-documented in the Gold Country.

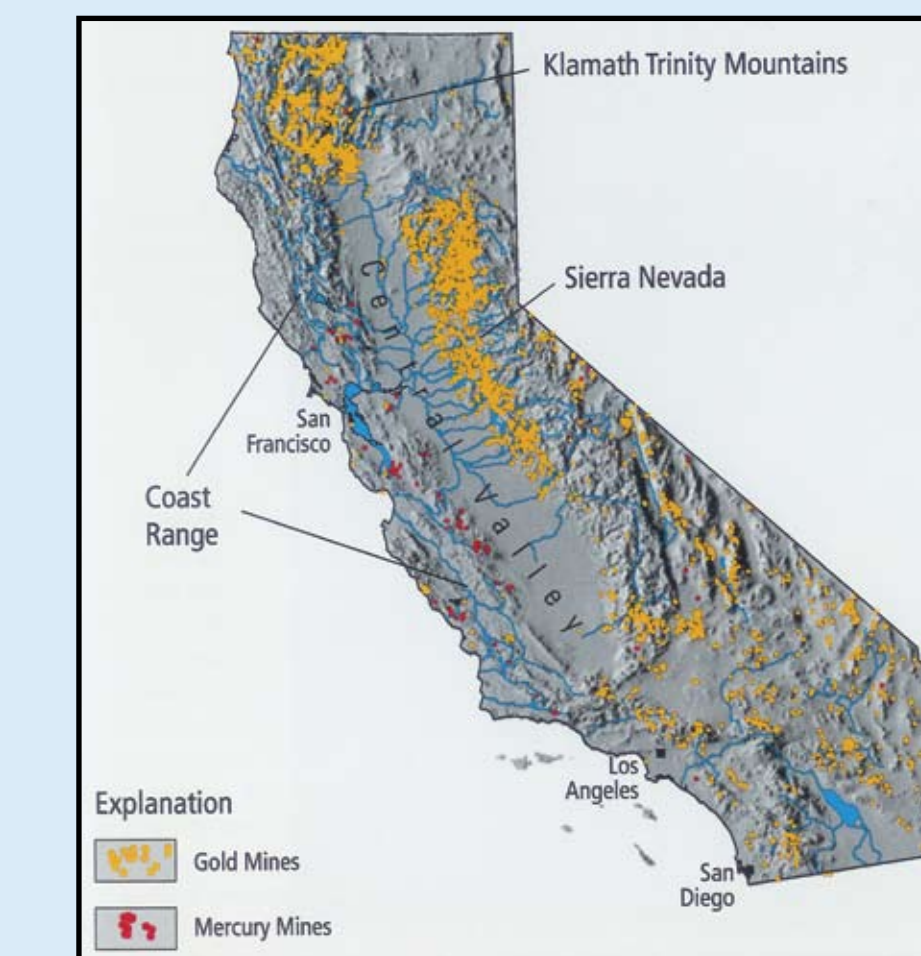


Contaminated fish and plants affect Indigenous practices such as ceremonies, basketweaving and diet, forcing native peoples to choose between tradition and health, and perpetuating the Gold Rush's destruction of native cultures.

GOALS of the Initiative:

1 Increase public awareness and involve the public in designing appropriate solutions

2 Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect the health of humans and wildlife



Nearly 50,000 abandoned mines in California are the source of extensive contamination, which continues to spread through the air, water system, and human activities such as recreation and development.

The Sierra Fund ENGAGES:

TRIBES, Recreationists, Environmental Organizations, County Planning, Environmental and Public Health Officers, Local Governments, State and Federal Regulatory Agencies, COMMUNITIES, Healthcare Professionals, Policymakers, SCIENTISTS, First 5 Commissions, Universities, WATERSHED GROUPS, Private Foundations, TEACHERS

Together, we can ADDRESS Mining's Toxic Legacy through:

Research

- Determine avenues of exposure
- Research toxicity of arsenic and distribution of mercury
- Test fish and wildlife
- Test soils on public lands

Education

- Identify public information needs and strategies for education
- Inform pregnant women and families with young children of hazards and how to protect themselves
- Develop materials for clinics, county government officials, and public education

Policy

- Develop and implement regulations to protect public health
- Identify and develop funding sources for research, community education and cleanup
- Involve all stakeholders in designing and implementing solutions
- Involve tribal input in cleanup of ancestral lands

What can I do?



BE INFORMED

Know how to protect yourself and your family from the hazards of mining toxins

Learn all sides of mining history--not just the popular stories

PARTICIPATE

Share your ideas and concerns with neighbors, policy-makers, and The Sierra Fund

Participate in public forums regarding mine cleanup and public health

Attend events promoting tribal culture

SUPPORT SOLUTIONS

Support policy change and new state and federal funding for cleanup of legacy mining toxins

Encourage local stakeholders to come together to design a solution that will fit your community

For more information contact:



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ENVIRONMENT

HEALTH

CULTURE