



EARTHWORKS

Earth Notes

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No Fooling: Obama continues Bush-era mining giveaways

In addition to opening up vast areas of our coastline to offshore oil drilling, the Obama administration is defending a Bush-era policy that allows unlimited amounts of our nation's treasured public lands to be used as toxic waste dumps for the multinational hardrock mining industry.



This decision -- in the form of a response to federal litigation filed by a coalition of conservation and Native American groups -- is completely inconsistent with earlier remarks by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar on the importance of updating our federal mineral policies to protect public lands.

I wish we could end this story with an "April Fools!", but it's all too true.

[\[Read the EARTHblog post for more info and links\]](#)

Court blocks Rock Creek Mine proposal for 3rd time



Rock Creek

On March 29th, a federal judge ruled that the Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Forest Service Organic Act in approving the Rock Creek Mine, which would have bored under the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness in the midst of popular recreational areas and key habitat for bull trout, grizzly bears and other sensitive wildlife species.

This marks the third time that federal courts have sided with the public and against Forest Service approvals of the ill-advised proposal.

EARTHWORKS has worked closely with Rock Creek Alliance -- the community group leading the fight -- for more than a decade to protect the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness from this ill-advised mine proposal. Hopefully, the third time will be the charm, and the proposal will be dropped.

- [\[Read the ruling\]](#)
- [\[Read the joint press release\]](#)
- [\[Visit the Rock Creek Alliance website\]](#)
- [\[Read the Missoulian's coverage of the decision\]](#)
- [\[Visit the EARTHWORKS Rock Creek page for more info/links\]](#)

New citizen measurements of air quality contradict shale gas industry claims of safe air

In early March, EARTHWORKS board member and MacArthur "genius" grant recipient Wilma Subra was part of a "stealth" team that measured pollution from shale gas facilities in the Fort Worth, Texas, area.

The tests showed methane levels (a surrogate gas for other toxics) as much as 20 times above normal background levels. The results raise troubling questions about shale gas industry pollution not only in Texas, but everywhere in the country where shale gas drilling and production is underway.

The "citizen" "stealth" tests are described as such because, thanks to new technology developed by Picarro Inc., pollution can now be measured from an ordinary vehicle moving at highway speeds.

The tests are part of the Texas Oil & Gas Accountability Project's efforts to make the Texas shale gas industry behave and DRILL RIGHT.

- [\[Read the press release\]](#)
- [\[Visit Texas OGAP's webpage\]](#)
- [\[Read EARTHblog on DRILL RIGHT TEXAS\]](#)

Environmental Protection Agency to study hydraulic fracturing again. This time, with science!

March 18th, the U.S. EPA announced it will spend more than \$1.9 million to study the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on water quality and public health.

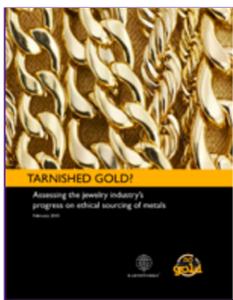
EPA did a similar study in 2004 which concluded not only that fracking constitutes no risk to drinking water, but that *no further study of the issue should be conducted.*

So why is EPA conducting this new study anyway?



[Click over to EARTHblog to find out!](#)

No Dirty Gold campaign's Tarnished Gold jeweler report card gets retailers moving on dirty gold



Last month, we told you about the release of *Tarnished Gold: assessing the jewelry industry's progress on ethical sourcing of metals.* In essence, Tarnished Gold is a report card that evaluates the progress jewelers have made in pursuit of cleaner sources of precious metals.

Some jewelers saw the first report and realized they needed to do more. So they sent us additional information and assurance about their efforts.

Yesterday we issued an updated report, which notes further advances by four large jewelers and a dozen smaller companies. Eleven small jewelry companies now deserve an "A" rating for their efforts.

[\[Download the updated Tarnished Gold jeweler report card\]](#)

EPA protects Appalachian waterways from mine waste

Today, EPA chief Lisa Jackson issued new guidance to help protect Appalachian waterways from being dumped with waste material from mountaintop removal coal mining.

Unfortunately the guidance doesn't fix the Bush EPA's fill rule, and doesn't apply to mines elsewhere in America.

[\[Learn more at EARTHblog\]](#)

Take Action!

Keep drilling toxics out of drinking water.

Click the pic to urge your Congress critters to support the FRAC Act.



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Better Business Bureau and Charity Navigator have given their *highest rating* to EARTHWORKS

Recycle your cell phone from home!



Cell phones contain toxic metals that can pollute the environment and threaten human health.

When recycled responsibly, these metals can be put back into circulation, decreasing the need for new metal mining.