

Issue 3 > May 31, 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

- [Feature story: Victory at Mt. St. Helens](#)
- [Freed: the KI Six and Robert Lovelace](#)
- [Compromise on Buckhorn Mountain](#)
- [New Mexico's people, water win stronger protections](#)
- [Forest Service proposes horrible new mining regulations](#)

Victory at Mt. St. Helens: BLM denies mine

Last month, the Northwest's environmental advocacy efforts, spearheaded by the [Gifford Pinchot Taskforce](#), achieved a major victory in spite of challenges posed by the 1872 Mining Law.

In 2007, the BLM and U.S. Forest Service made a preliminary decision to lease over 200 acres of land for copper mining just a few miles north of Mount St. Helens in Washington State.



Credit: Earth Science Picture of the Day

The land targeted by a Colorado-based mining company is located in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, which serves as an area for scientific research, conservation and recreation. Perhaps more importantly *much of the land involved was sold to the federal government for the express purpose of protecting it from development.*

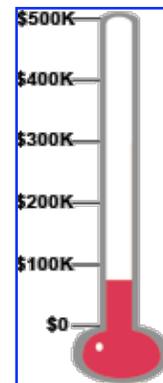
In response to the preliminary decision, the federal agencies received over 33,000 public comments, 99 percent of which were opposed to the mine; including opposition from Washington State's Senator Cantwell. Finally, on April 30th the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officially announced their rejection of the

Take Action!

[Tell](#) the Forest Service not to make the 1872 Mining Law *worse*.

New mining rules should better protect the interests of communities and the environment -- not the mining industry.

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company's requests.

Though we can celebrate this instance where the federal government did the right thing, the fight might not be over permanently. Some of the land falls under the jurisdiction of the [1872 Mining Law](#) - a law that the Forest Service interprets as prohibiting the denial of mines. Although this particular proposal is dead, another company may make another attempt to mine in the area. [\[Learn More\]](#)

Freed: the KI Six and Robert Lovelace

In April, [thousands of you urged the Ontario Premier](#) to release the First Nation leaders who were jailed for attempting to protect their lands by protesting mining activities. **Good news:** this week, these activists have been released.

The KI Six, of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, and Robert Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation had been sentenced to six months in jail but have been released ahead of time. [\[Learn More\]](#)

Compromise on Buckhorn Mountain: model for new mines?

The [Okanogan Highlands Alliance](#) (OHA), a Washington state environmental advocacy organization, recently achieved a major victory in their 18 year battle to protect their community from the impacts of irresponsible large-scale mining. Following two years of appeals, last month, Canadian mining company Crown Resources/Kinross reached a settlement with the local conservation groups. The settlement includes higher protections than those required by federal and state agencies! [\[Learn More\]](#)

New Mexico's people, water win stronger protections

Earlier this month, New Mexico adopted one of the nation's strongest rules protecting water and public health from toxic oil and gas waste pits. The new rule mandates that all oil and gas waste pits be lined and registered with the state; requiring companies to find alternatives to pits when groundwater is within 50-feet of the surface. Furthermore, the rule requires any waste buried onsite to meet stringent standards to guard against contamination. [\[Learn More\]](#)

Forest Service proposes horrible new mining regulations

On May 27th, the comment period formally closed on new mining regulations proposed by the Forest Service. Although, absent 1872 Mining Law reform, there is a crying need to update mining regulations that "have not been significantly revised since 1974", this proposal is worse than nothing. The lowlights:

It codifies the Forest Service's position that they cannot deny mining under the 1872 Mining Law;

It expands the authority of the 1872 Mining Law onto lands currently governed by other laws - laws that allow the Forest Service to weigh mining proposals against other potential land uses like hunting, fishing or grazing;

It allows irresponsible mining companies to decide how much environmental protection is permitted at their mines;

It expands a class of operations of called notice mines -- which are exempt from public and environmental review;

It would severely limit public participation in the rulemaking process

Although the comment period has formally closed, late comments may still be heard. Please take action by sending a letter to the Forest Service. [\[Take Action/Learn More\]](#)

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