



MINERAL
POLICY
C E N T E R

*Protecting
Communities
and the
Environment*

AND THE MAN OF STEEL THOUGHT KRYPTONITE WAS A PROBLEM

1872 Mining Law Fact #5:



Good thing Superman never took on acid mine drainage. The acidity of water affected by hardrock mines has been known to dissolve steel—and just about anything else that gets in its way.

Sulfuric acid is released when hardrock mining companies expose sulfur-laden rock in pursuit of metals like gold, silver and copper. The drainage of this acid leaches toxins like lead directly into local watersheds. The Iron Mountain Mine in California generates water 10,000 times more acidic than battery acid.

And the danger is persistent. Mine workings dating to Roman times have drained acid continuously for 2000 years.

Yet the 1872 Mining Law has no environmental provisions to address acid mine drainage. You might say it would be easier to stop a speeding locomotive.

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Part of a series on the 1872 Mining Law, highlighting impacts on taxpayers, community health, and water resources—and the need for meaningful reform.

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