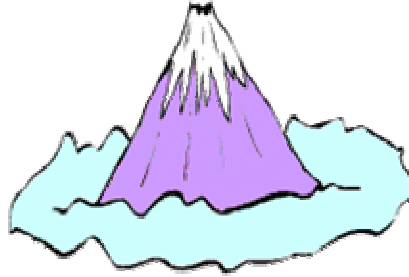


MINERAL  
POLICY  
C E N T E R

*Protecting  
Communities  
and the  
Environment*

# MAKING A MOLEHILL OUT OF A MOUNTAIN

## 1872 Mining Law Fact #9:



Modern mining is so destructive it routinely reduces mountains to molehills—digging pits up to 1,000 feet deep and several miles across to remove massive amounts of rock and earth in search of ore. This ore is doused with poisons like cyanide to extract trace amounts of gold, leaving piles of contaminated waste rock that can leach acid and toxic metals into local rivers, streams and aquifers.

A single gold ring leaves in its wake *at least 20 TONS* of mine waste! And *3 MILLION TONS* of waste rock are produced for every ton of gold that mining companies extract in the U.S. Yet the outdated 1872 Mining Law places no effective limits on this destruction.

By 1997, Pegasus Gold Company had reduced Montana's Spirit Mountain to a molehill, replacing this tribal sacred site with an open-pit gold mine. The site will leach acid into the surrounding watershed for the next 1,000 years. And there's no way to make a new mountain out of *that* molehill.

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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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