

Resolution #2
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

OPPOSE USE OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS FOR MINING EXPLORATION IN NATIONAL FOREST INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS

Submitted by: Toiyabe Chapter Sierra Club and Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Background: Because of the 1872 Mining Law, mining exploration activities are permitted in national forest inventoried roadless areas (IRA), even if they permit the construction of new roads. Recently, the Bridgeport District Ranger of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest decided that mining exploration involving 1/2 mile of new road construction in the Aurora Crater IRA would be granted under a categorical exclusion. This means the exploration and road building is excluded from analysis in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS). Because of protests by environmental groups, this decision has been examined by the Forest Supervisor. The area in question is close to sage grouse leks and has many cultural sites. Categorical exclusions for such activities set a dangerous precedent, especially in Nevada where gold mining is so profitable.

Resolution: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes the use of categorical exclusions for mining activities in national forest inventoried roadless areas (IRA) and asks the Chief of the Forest Service to require that an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS) be prepared for all such activities.

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