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Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
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EARMARKED FUND NEEDED TO CLEAN UP ABANDONED MINES

An estimated 40 per cent of all headwater streams in the West are now polluted by abandoned mines for metaliferous ores. These problems occur especially with mine tunnels into slopes, but can occur with other types of mines.

Nationally nearly 20 per cent of all rivers, as well as ground water, are polluted by abandoned mines. There are nearly a half million of such mines in the United States.

These mines leach toxic chemicals such as arsenic and cadmium into drainages, reducing stocks of trout and other biotic life in these streams.

Those who once owned these mines can no longer be found, and no one wants to take on the clean-up task. An earmarked fund needs to be established to clean up these abandoned hard-rock mines. Such a fund now exists only for coal mining.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs calls for the establishment of an earmarked fund, based on taxes on current hard-rock mining, to clean up abandoned hard-rock mines.