

KORE MINING ARTICLE/MESSAGE

Kevin Peterson, operations manager at Hot Creek Fly Fishing Ranch

It appears that a company is planning on digging for gold just next to Hot Creek. Below are a series of talking points about the project, followed by a letter sent in by Kevin Peterson in opposition to the project.

KORE Mining Opposition Talking Points

MAIN MESSAGE:

This will impact the natural beauty we all enjoy in the Eastern Sierra, tourism, and recreation that our economy depends on. It will lead to an open pit mine.

This will impact the Bi-state Sage Grouse. Their population numbers are already in decline.

This should not be a Categorical Exemption. There should be an EA at the very least. (The USFS uses a CAT Ex because they have to let the claimant have access to their claims under the 1872 mining law. However, this excludes an environmental analysis and limits public input based on little information)

Talking Points:

Where will the water come from? TOML/MCWD?—they are restricted in how much water they can pull from Mammoth Creek by LADWP even if there were enough to pull and groundwater is precious, especially in this year's drought. LADWP?—can't sell water to non-rate payers. Water is a hot topic in the Eastern Sierra. Ranchers need water for their own operations. Then who?

Where will the mud go? Will it be toxic from hitting/mixing with geothermal waters?

This is in sage grouse habitat and where collared data shows they are there. There should be no drilling or preparation activities from Feb-mid July when the sage grouse chicks are fledged. The BSSG plan recommends limited activity within 4 miles of a Lek, which is the case here.

This is deer country

All the roads they are putting in are new roads. The roads from Royal Gold in the 1990s have healed and been covered by vegetation.

Some of KORE's sites are new—not where Royal Gold explored so definitely new roads

Scraped drill pad and road scars last 20 years or more

It's a beautiful area within sight of Hot Creek and the airport. It will be visible—night lights and noise 24/7. It will put off tourists, campers, fisherman.

A lot of trucks coming and going, a lot of dust—what route? Green Church to Antelope Springs?

Antelope Springs from Ormat? Plus, it means a lot of GHG emissions.

The major problem with exploratory drilling is that gold mining today is via an open pit mine.

The additional business in Mammoth is not worth it. It is temporary.

KORE Mining: <https://www.koremining.com/long-valley>, a Canadian company out of Vancouver. They have \$8 million in cash. An exploratory company, not an mining operation company.

Inyo National Forest's Notice of Intent dated April 7:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/nfs/11558/www/nepa/115018_FSPLT3_5616373.pdf

Comments due May 6, 2021. You may submit comments on the project website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59294>. Go to “Comment/Object on Project” on the right side of the page and you can type in your comments or attach a file.

Questions, things to point out in comment letters:

Where does the water come from?

How many gallons per drill site or per day?

What route will water trucks take?

Where will the mud be hauled off to? What route will they take? So no sump pits at all, right?

How deep will the drilling go and at what angle and direction?

Will they drill to or under Hot Creek?

Will they drill under private land?

What chance of hot water coming back up with the mud? --That would have more toxic chemicals than just water e.g. arsenic, lithium, boron needing proper disposal.

What is their drilling lubricant?

Will there be a biologist on site? An archeologist? A Native American monitor?

The new western sites have not been drilled before and so have not been surveyed for cultural resources.

How much noise—what decimal level of noise?

How will this affect the deer? The sage grouse?

Will this project exceed the 3% BSSG habitat disturbance cap?

How will fencing around the drill pads or the site impact BSSG? Will the fencing be flagged?

This area is grazed. Has the rancher been notified?

The road widths will exceed 10 feet in disturbed area on a slope with the overburden being pushed out to the sides so they will exceed 1 acre of disturbance. 4 of the roads are on slopes (sites to the west).

30'x50' is not very large, but the overburden usually extends beyond the 30'x50' scraped area.

OceanaGold says their pads are 60x70, but have room for sump pits. At Conglomerate Mesa, K2 Gold's drill site disturbance was 50'x50' with slop over. We doubt the 0.93 acre disturbance and SMARA applies. Plus the trucks will need turn around area for the western drill sites. And that road may need to be widened.

Throwing seed down and then returning in 3 years would only produce grasses and weeds. Who will check for weeds and remove them? Any cheatgrass should be removed immediately. The company should be required to return in another 3 years to ensure sagebrush and bitterbrush are returning. The grasses/cheatgrass will increase fire risk in the area.

Focus on the reasons for an EA: deer, BSSG, vegetation/habitat, other wildlife, impacts to Hot Creek, arsenic in the water, dust, noise, light pollution.

My name is Kevin Peterson, operations manager at Hot Creek Fly Fishing Ranch, a stone's throw from Kore mining's proposed exploration sites. I am adamantly opposed to this exploration for MANY reasons. The fact that this is being considered based on a categorical exclusion from 1872 is crazy. When that exclusion was written, exploration was done with a shovel and a pickax. Today, that exploration is

done with giant drilling rigs. I am extremely worried about what drilling may do to the water table in the area and how it might affect Hot Creek. I would like to know where the water will be coming from to do their drilling. Where will the tailings go? How will the noise pollution affect the business at Hot Creek Ranch that brings very important tourist dollars to the area? I am very concerned about the devastation of the area while putting in roads to the sites. The area they have their claims on is bi-state Sage Grouse habitat not to mention deer, bear, cougar, coyote, marmot, eagle and many other species. I believe that it is the job of the forest service to make sure that this sacred public land is protected and at the very least, have an environmental assessment completed before any exploration can take place. I appreciate your time and consideration,

Kevin Peterson 760-937-0519