
-----Original Message-----

From: Mono County California via Mono County California <noreply@mono.ca.gov>

Sent: Friday, April 30, 2021 2:07 PM

To: Robert Lawton <rlawton@mono.ca.gov>

Subject: Form submission from: Contact the County

Submitted on Friday, April 30, 2021 - 2:06pm Submitted by anonymous user: 24.205.190.227 Submitted values are:

Name: Sara Lessley

E-mail Address: 4whitefields@gmail.com

County Department: Unknown

Comments:

Dear Board of Supervisors:

We are very concerned about the KORE proposal to do exploratory mine drilling near Hot Creek> We are trying to learn as much as possible in the short term between learning about this plan last month via Mammoth Voices, and the deadline to submit comments. We will attend virtually the Sierra Club, town council and your meeting this week. As of now, here is our reaction: Our family has been visiting the eastern Sierra since the late 1960s, first during the winter but increasingly throughout the seasons.

We value all that the forest service and the local communities and towns have done to protect and preserve these lands and resources -- while also making pristine sites available for wide public use of so many types (whether hiking, biking, fishing, skiing, kayaking or birdwatching).

So how is that a potentially extremely disruptive/destructive mining activity is being rushed into place -- apparently based on a very old statute -- without the proper review?

Let's take the time to consider these plans, to discuss the effects vs the benefits for both the industry and the area at large.

We are the fortunate beneficiaries of these natural wonders; let's be good stewards too for ourselves and our children.

Respectfully Sara Lessley and Whitefield family La Canada and Mammoth, California

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://monocounty.ca.gov/node/7/submission/1574>

May 1, 2021

Deanna Dulen
P.O. Box 349
Lee Vining CA 93541

Subject: Recommend Opposing Kore exploratory drilling and extractive mining, and Consider Designating Long Valley Caldera as a Geo-heritage Area

Dear Mono County Supervisors,

As a 30 year long term resident of the Eastern Sierra, and previously as a geology student in 1982 visiting Long Valley Caldera, I recognize the outstanding scenic and geological heritage and scenic inspiration values of the Long Valley Caldera, Hot Creek, Mammoth mountains, San Joaquin Ridge and Devils Postpile woven together to inspire residents, visitors and students from around the world.

Putting an eyesore of an exploratory drilling rig and potential extractive mine in this spectacular landscape would more harm the awe and grandeur treasured by many. I recall many exploratory discussions with previous Mono County Supervisor, Andrea Lawrence, about the unique, spectacular, and significance of the geological heritage of the Eastern Sierra in Mono County and also of the Long Valley Caldera. We joined other community members in considering possibilities, for a designation that would acknowledge and showcase the spectacular Geological Heritage of the significant scientific, educational, cultural, and aesthetic values of the Land Valley Caldera. Possibilities discussed include a National Natural Landmark, Heritage Site, Geo-Park, Geo-Heritage site.

The significance is described by Dr. Wesley Hildreth, and many other geologists, have published and guided many visitors and scientists to the wonders of the Eastern Sierra and Long Valley Caldera. Recent publications of particular interest include: [Geologic field-trip guide to Long Valley Caldera, California](https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sir20175022L), <https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2016/5120/sir20165120.pdf> and the [Long Valley Caldera Lake and Reincision of Owens River Gorge](https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2016/5120/sir20165120.pdf).

Exploratory drilling and potential subsequent mining activity would compromise the scenic and air and water quality values, and harm flora and fauna. Additionally, as the California drought continues and water resources decline this project would harm wildlife and flora, and yet another critical resource would be degraded. Migratory corridors of mule deer and other wildlife would be further impacted that already have many pressures from the airport and highway 395.

For these reasons, I request that the Mono County Supervisors not support a Categorical Exclusion as the appropriate decision document. In the past, exploratory drilling was not approved in this area. I recommend that the exploratory drilling not be approved, and if the USFS is to continue, important that a full environment assessment or even an EIS be conducted, as the specific resource impacts and cumulative impacts would degrade and injure the scenic, geological, air & water, and impact flora and fauna.

Furthermore, I recommend that the Mono County Supervisors consider a recommending Long Valley Caldera and potentially other outstanding Geological, Scenic, and Cultural values that local residents, visitors, and future generations will be inspired by for their natural and undamaged values.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deanna M. Dulen

Mono County Board of Supervisors

Re: Supervisors Meeting May 4, 2020, item 7B: Kore Mining Project

Dear Board of Supervisors:

I have read the draft letter prepared by Mono County staff to the Inyo National Forest in response to their April 8 Scoping Letter. I strongly support the staff letter and urge you to approve (with any modifications suggested at the BOS meeting) the letter and submit it to the Forest Service by the close of business on May 6. I commend the staff for the depth of detail provided in the letter particularly as it relates to the mining ordinance, general plan, etc.

Since the previous BoS meeting on April 20, I have read various additional documents such as the Plan of Operations submitted to the Forest Service on April 28, and various documents posted by Kore Mining on their web site. It is clear that the project outlined in the scoping letter is only the first in a series of anticipated exploratory drilling projects that for the company are one project and should be considered as a whole in determining whether a Categorical Exclusion should apply. This is the same gaming of the system used in the 1990s when Royal Gold broke their drilling project into 9 sequential parts in order to qualify for a Categorical Exclusion.

Kore Mining's proposal and plan of operations provides insufficient information to justify a Categorical Exclusion. The missing information can only be determined by a proper environmental review. I highlight only four of many questions unanswered or inadequately answered by the project proposal.

1. For a Categorical Exclusion, total surface disturbance must be under 1 acre. Kore Mining says this project totals .93 acre. I doubt that this is an accurate figure. It seems to include only the roads and drilling pads without including other areas that will be disturbed by parking, turn-around by vehicles, grading of road shoulders and cuts into uphill areas to achieve a level road suitable for heavy vehicles, etc. When the additional drilling stages are added in, the Kore Mining exploratory drilling project exceeds 1 acre. A project approved under a Categorical Exemption must be completed within one year. The full Kore Mining exploration project as outlined in their literature would take more than a year.
2. Bi-State Distinct Population Greater Sage Grouse (BSSG) are an Inyo National Forest sensitive species. Endangered species listing has been avoided only by a joint effort of all involved parties. The Kore Mining project area includes a number of Sage Grouse leks. On May 2, when I visited the project area, I saw large amounts of sage grouse scat on and adjacent to a road close to one of the drill sites. Only an environmental assessment under NEPA can determine the existence of and extent of a threat to this Sage Grouse population -- and whether or not there are feasible mitigations. Possible negative effects on BSSG population include proximity of the BSSG to the drill pads, effects of noise from truck traffic, 24-hour drilling, and night lights on the grouse. The project proposal does not address the Sage Grouse issue.

3. Water: An environmental review is necessary to determine whether the drilling will pose a danger of contaminating water sources in the area (or ground areas), which ultimately may connect to nearby Hot Creek, segments of which are a wild and scenic river suitable river according to forest plan designation. The plan is vague regarding sources of the water, its quality, and its disposal.
4. Tribal consultation: Although the Kore Mining project proposal mentions lack of cultural resources at the locations of the drill pads, this assertion is made on the basis of archaeological/cultural surveys made for prior drilling projects. There is no mention in the proposal of consultation with the several tribes regarding their historic use and knowledge of this area. The tribes are often aware of cultural resources which are not known to non-tribal members doing cultural surveys. Meaningful tribal consultation should be required prior to approval of the project.

Beyond objecting to the use of a Categorical Exclusion for this specific project, I urge the county to take a broader, pro-active approach to gold mining projects at this general location and elsewhere in the county. In 1998, the county facilitated the formation of a broadly representative group (The Mining Committee) to consider the effects of such projects on the economy, the environment, and the quality of life for the county and its citizens. I urge the county to facilitate formation of a similar committee or study. It was the last-minute united community opposition that helped stop the drilling project developing into an open pit cyanide heap leach mine when the 9th Categorical Exclusion was proposed circa 1997-98. Again in 2011, another company, Delta Minerals, explored buying the Royal Gold claims with the intent of additional drilling and actual mining. I met with Delta Minerals executives at least twice, expressing community opposition. Delta Minerals, recognizing previous strong community opposition, met with other community representatives. The CEO of Mammoth Mountain, Rusty Gregory, expressed opposition to Delta Minerals proposed Hot Creek area mine because of negative effects on our tourist-based economy. Too bad that Elizabeth Tenny is not still here to help lead the fight against mining in Hot Creek area as she did against Royal Gold and Delta Minerals efforts. This is not a mine in some hidden corner of the county. It is located in the economic center of the county and its tourist economy. Eventually, Delta Minerals decided not to pursue the mining project. There were other efforts to develop a gold mine in the Hot Creek area prior to Royal Gold. If the Kore Mining proposal is not approved, Kore may still be able to proceed with exploration after environmental review. If successful, they will sell their claim to a mining company which will attempt to develop a mine. Mono County should not wait passively to react to each exploratory and drilling proposal as it comes forth. By facilitating formation of a group comparable to The Mining Committee in the late 1990s, the country can take a more pro-active response to keeping Mono County Wild by Nature.

Thank you,

Malcolm Clark

637 John Muir Road, Mammoth Lakes. 760-924-5639. Wmalcolm.clark@gmail.com.

From: Sharon Clark <sharonr.clark@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 3, 2021 6:25 PM
To: Clerk Recorder <clerkrecorder@mono.ca.gov>
Subject: Kore Mining Proposal

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

*Would you please include this email in the BOS official record re: Kore Mining proposal. Thank you.
Sharon*

Your staff prepared a super letter for the USFS re: Kore Mining proposal. I ask you, BOS, to please send it or something very similar to USFS about the Kore Mining proposal.

Our Eastern Sierra succeeds and depends on spectacular natural lands and pristine environments that facilitate world-class fishing, skiing, hiking, rock-climbing, kayaking, birding, OHV, thermal pools and outdoor activities galore for locals and tourists. Escaping their concrete jungle and their mega congestion is necessary for city folks. Our Mono County Motto, "Wild by Nature", beckons to people world wide.

If the US Forest Service allows Kore Mining to begin building 14 drill sites/pads **without** a "Categorical Exclusion", it would threaten everything that sustains our tourism based economy. Allowing the Kore Mining Project to go forward **without** an environmental assessment flies in the face of what the Eastern Sierra stands for and is. I visited the Kore Mining project and took pictures of some of the drill sites. These lighted 24/7 drill sites would be visible from HW 395, MMH airport as well as the road to the Hot Creek geothermal over-look. What would our tourists think about drill pads in the middle of a valley? Are drill pads consistent with "Wild by Nature"? Visitors sustain us; mining projects do not.

Thanks loads,
Sharon