

IDAHO SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS ADVISORY COUNCIL

www.idahoscac.org

ISCAC Position Memo on Mining Law Reform

Members

- *Ada Co. F & G League*
- *Blackfoot River Bowmen*
- *Backcountry H&A*
- *Bonner Co. Sportsmen*
- *Deer Hunters of ID*
- *Found. for N. A. Wild Sheep*
- *Greater Yellowstone Coal.*
- *ID Bird Hunters*
- *ID Falconers Ass.*
- *ID Houndsmen Ass.*
- *ID Wildlife Fed.*
- *ID Fochers Club*
- *ID Rifle & Pistol Ass.*
- *ID State Bowhunters*
- *ID Salmon Steelhead Unltd.*
- *ID Trappers Ass.*
- *ID Traditional Bowhunters*
- *ID Walleye Unlimited*
- *ID BASS Fed.*
- *ID Trout Unlimited*
- *ID Mule Deer Foundation*
- *Landowners & Sportsmen*
- *Nat. Wild Turkey Fed.*
- *N. ID Tree Hound Ass.*
- *Pheasants Forever*
- *Rocky Mountain Elk Found.*
- *ID Chapters SCI*
- *SE ID Mule Deer Found.*
- *Snake River Cutthroats*

The 1872 Mining Law, which governs hard rock mining (gold, copper, silver, etc.) on America's public lands, was signed into law 135 years ago. The basic doctrines of the 1872 Mining Law remain the same as the day they were passed. Namely, that:

- ♦ Public lands are available for private mineral claims;
- ♦ Miners on the public lands are entitled to exclude the public from their claims;
- ♦ The public receives no payment for this private use of the lands or the value of the minerals removed.
- ♦ Miners can eventually own both the minerals and the land for a nominal fee

Public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service harbor some of the most important fish and wildlife habitat and provide the finest hunting, angling, trapping and backcountry equestrian opportunities, not only in Idaho, but across the West. Historically, mining played a central role in the social and economic growth of many communities. But today, studies from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service show that hunting and fishing alone generate more than \$63 billion in revenues to local economies. Hunting and fishing in Idaho is now a critical mainstream income in many small-towns generating millions of dollars to those communities.

ISCAC urges our legislators to:

- ♦ Allocate funds generated from royalties and fees assessed on mined materials toward state fish and wildlife departments, sportsmen/conservation organizations, and others for fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects impacted by past mining activities.
- ♦ Ensure that federal resource professionals have the discretion in the planning and permitting processes to protect public lands with high fish, water, and wildlife values.
- ♦ Prohibit the patenting or sale of public lands under this law.

For many years, Congress has considered reform of the General Mining Law of 1872. Finally, it appears they are moving from intentions to action. H.R. 2262 has just passed the House of Representatives and has moved to the Senate. The Idaho Sportsman's Caucus Advisory Council (ISCAC) supports this very critical legislation that will modernize the 135 year old mining law.

Contact ISCAC for more information.