



THE OBSERVER

Volume 81, Issue 9, June 2023

Whittier Area Audubon Society

- **General Meeting: Photo Share & Potluck**
- **Bird Walk:: Sycamore Canyon 6/10 , 7am**
- **Field trip: 6/17 San Gabriel Mountains**

We are a chapter of National Audubon Society



Audubon

This is the final issue of Volume 81. The Observer will take a short summer hiatus and return in September. Happy birding!

Visit our website
www.whittieraudubon.org

destinations are not set due to the fact that some areas are not open or accessible now due to road damage or snow. Check in on our website or contact me at stevehuber@hotmail.com for updates. Drivers will need an Adventure Pass to park in most places we will be going. One day passes are \$5 and and one year pass is \$30. They are available several places, the most reliable are the Big 5 Sports stores. Bring your birding equipment, water, lunch, sunblock and a chair might be a good idea. We will be leaving the Whittier Community Center parking lot at 7:00 AM.



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MAJOR MINING REFORM LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS

This is the first opportunity to reform American laws regarding Mining on public lands. The law from 1872 is woefully outdated and does not serve present day realities well:

GENERAL MEETING

June Program

Thursday, June 15, 2023
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Photo Share Night.

Our Final General Meeting of the season will be a Pot Luck and Photo Share. **NOTE THE TIME CHANGE.** Bring a thumb drive with up to 25 of your favorite photos to share. Also main dish, appetizers or dessert to share. Bring your own plate and utensils We will be in the smaller room across the hallway due to a City event.

There will be no online presence.



June Field Trips

Beginning Bird Walk, Sycamore Canyon

Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August,)

June 10, 2023, 7:00am

Join us in Sycamore Canyon for our Beginning Bird Walks! The entrance is on Workman Mill Rd. just south of Rose Hills Gate 17. Be prompt as we are required to lock the gate behind us.

San Gabriel Mountain Field Trip June 17, 2023



Once again, we will be heading to higher elevations for our June field trip on the 17th, this year to the San Gabriel Mountains. As of the time of publication, the



From Patagonia Resource Alliance:

The primary law that governs hard rock mining is the 1872 Mining Law. It was designed in the 19th century to promote western expansion, and has not been significantly reformed since its initial passage. It covers most underground resources besides oil, gas, coal, sand, and gravel.

On May 19, Representative Raul Grijalva (AZ) and Senator Martin Heinrich (NM) introduced legislation to bring the 1872 Mining Law into the 21st century.

This summary is from our friends at **Earthworks:**

Principles of legitimate 1872 Mining Law reform should include:

Establish meaningful Tribal consultation and Indigenous resource protections.

On January 26, 2021, the Biden-Harris administration issued an [Executive Order](#) (EO) on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships. The EO directs the Interior and Agriculture Departments to plan and engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation in the development of policies, like hardrock mining regulation, that have Tribal implications. Consultations and regulations on mining should seek to achieve the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities.

Protecting special places from mining

Under the federal government’s current interpretation, land managers give preference to mining over all other land uses—from recreation to drinking water supplies to hunting.

This leaves special places like the [Cabinet Mountains Wilderness](#), and the [wild and scenic Chetco River](#) in danger from mineral development.

Reform of the mining law must recognize that there are some places that should not be mined and must clearly give land managers the ability to deny a mine proposal.

Strengthening environmental standards

There are no statutory environmental standards written specifically for mining on lands open to location under the 1872 Mining Law.

The Clean Water Act does not protect groundwater from mining pollution, and there is no definition of how to reclaim a mine, for example. Mining industry-specific environmental standards must be created to:

- protect surface and groundwater quality from erosion and toxic discharge;
- require landscape restoration concurrent with mining; protect topsoil and wildlife habitats;
- require productive native revegetation; and
- minimize and neutralize mine wastes.

Fiscal reforms

The 1872 Mining Law currently provides the mining industry with billions of dollars in subsidies. The two most egregious:

- unlike all other extractive industries, hardrock mining pays no royalty for minerals taken from public lands;
- for \$5 an acre, mining interests have patented (purchased) an area roughly equivalent in size to the state of Connecticut containing minerals valued at more than \$300 billion.

A new, reformed mining law should end patenting, and establish a fair royalty—based on the value of the mineral extracted.

Enforcement, inspection, and bonding

Enforcement and inspection

Currently, federal public land managers cannot enforce what mining

regulations that do exist. Instead, they must petition the Justice Department to do so—a slow and cumbersome process.

Under a reformed mining law, land managers must have the authority to ensure operator compliance by requiring:

- enforcement actions for violations,
- frequent inspections, and
- civil and criminal penalty assessments.

Additionally, new mining permits must not be given to operators with outstanding violations.

Bonding and financial guarantees

To protect taxpayers and provide incentive to fully comply with the law, financial guarantees must be required for all phases of operation that would completely cover the cost of both reclaiming the mine and the costs associated with managing the reclamation.

Financial guarantees must be backed by concrete financial instruments. Self-bonding/corporate guarantees are not acceptable.

Abandoned mine reclamation fund

There are more than [500,000 abandoned hardrock mines in the United States that will cost between \\$32 and \\$72 billion dollars to reclaim](#). Currently there is no funding source for abandoned hardrock mine reclamation. An abandoned mine land fund, paid for through mining royalties and fees, is needed to clean up the scarred landscapes and polluted waters left by the mining industry.

EARTHWORKS.ORG:

WE ADVOCATE TO STOP POLLUTION FROM OIL, GAS, AND MINING WHILE PROMOTING A JUST AND CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE