



Protecting National Parks from Mining Threats – Montana, Wyoming, & Idaho

Mining on Public Lands and National Parks in Montana, Wyoming, & Idaho

Celebrated for their scenic beauty, abundant wildlife and cultural resources, the Northern Rockies national parks—from Glacier to Yellowstone—are places to be protected and stewarded for future generations to experience. This is why national parks and newly designated conservation areas prohibit *new* mining claims within their boundaries. Yet, there are still over **140 places** where mining activities remain possible inside of a national park or monument in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho.



Unlike every other public land use, the specific location of mining claims is largely left up to the claim holder's choice. This drastically limits the ability of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho's public land managers, like the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service, to protect high value conservation areas. It is also why there are over **15,000 mining claims within 30 miles of national parks and monuments in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho**. In Montana alone, **over 35-percent** of mining claims are within 30 miles of national parks and monuments.

While a mine claim does not guarantee an active mine will develop, it is an exceedingly easy first step; a mine has a nominal annual fee and few restrictions considering potential harm to surrounding landscapes or communities. As a result, the claim system directly threatens clean air and water, wildlife habitat, connectivity and cultural resources conserved by parks and monuments. In 2023, **14 million** people visited Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho's national park sites, contributing over **\$2.5 billion** in economic benefit to the state. Meanwhile, mine claim holders paid less than \$10 per acre to possess public lands with a mine claim. Commonsense changes to the mining laws are essential to protect Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho's national parks, monuments and local economies.

IMPROVING THE CLAIM SYSTEM TO PROTECT PARKS

National parks are places that bring us together even in divided times. Poll after poll shows Americans overwhelmingly support protecting national parks on both sides of the political aisle, united behind clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife. NPCA is committed to securing bipartisan victories for the parks with commonsense mining law reform and mobilizing park supporters to protect these cherished landscapes. Now, more than ever, our parks need your help.

For more information:

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SPOTLIGHT

National Park Sites in the Northern Rockies

From Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Craters of the Moon, national park sites in the Northern Rockies are surrounded by mining claims, including several within Glacier National Park and Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area. Gold mining interests along the Centennial Mountains and within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem threaten clean water, abundant wildlife populations, and critical habitat connectivity that unite communities across this region.

MONTANA, WYOMING & IDAHO'S MINING CLAIMS BY THE NUMBERS

MONTANA, WYOMING & IDAHO'S MINING CLAIMS BY THE NUMBERS	
CLAIMS LOCATED ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS	492,178
CLAIMS LOCATED ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS IN MT, ID, AND WY	91,629
CLAIMS WITHIN 30 MILES OF MONTANA, WYOMING & IDAHO'S NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS	15,245
CLAIMS INSIDE MONTANA, WYOMING & IDAHO'S NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS	141