

# USFS Abandoned Mine Assessment

**Type of Project:** Assessment of mine features on U.S. Forest Service lands in California.

**Project Cost:** \$84,000 (FY 15-16); \$150,000 (FYs 13/14 and 14/15)

**Project Partners:** U.S. Forest Service Regional Office 5, Department of Conservation

## Mine History/Project Background

The California Department of Conservation's Abandoned Mine Lands Program (AMLP) performs assessments of abandoned mines on USFS lands throughout California under a master contract agreement. This current project involves mine site assessments and prioritizing the remediation of physical and chemical hazards at select sites on USFS lands.

## Challenges

The USFS needs to identify assess abandoned mine features on public forest lands, including dangerous openings and potential contamination that could impact human safety, water, or other sensitive environmental receptors. There are an estimated 7,280 Topographically Occurring Mine Symbols (TOMS<sup>1</sup>) on all USFS lands in California. The AMLP has assessed 1,380 high priority TOMS, and an estimated 5,900 potential TOMS remain to be located and screened for hazards. These mine features are scattered throughout California's 18 National Forests.

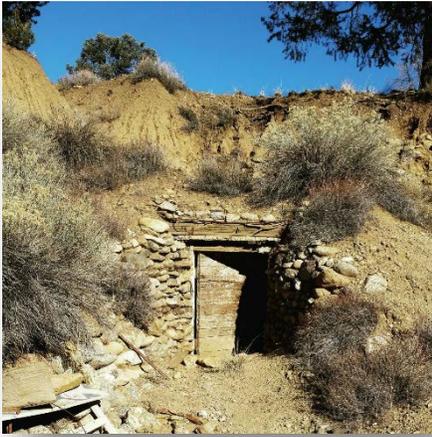
## Inventory and Assessment Approach

In 2014, under a \$150,000 agreement with the USFS, the AMLP completed an analysis of existing data for 18 national forests in California to determine the level of completeness and data quality for abandoned mine sites on USFS lands in the state. The analysis resulted in identifying the Eldorado and Inyo National Forests as a high priority for field inventory. In 2014, AMLP conducted an assessment of 317 TOMS in these two forests, which represents 77 mine sites and 1,355 individual mine features over 41 days of fieldwork. AMLP provided the USFS with information about the most severe physical safety hazards and provided recommendations to protect humans and wildlife.



Adit (horizontal mine opening) located in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.  
Photo: Samantha Birdsong, DOC, (2015).

<sup>1</sup> TOMS ("Topographically-Occurring Mine Symbols") are mining symbols depicted on the USGS 7.5' map series.



Adit (horizontal mine opening) located in the Los Padres National Forest. Photo: Samantha Birdsong, DOC, (2015).

Likewise, in 2015 and 2016, the AMLP is performing an assessment for the Los Padres and Shasta-Trinity National Forests, also identified as high priority forests for additional assessment of hazards. This will involve the inventory of 170 TOMS symbols over 40 days of fieldwork. Mine sites targeted will be those closest to highly visited areas, such as roads, campgrounds, or trail heads. The resulting data from this inventory will be provided to the USFS in order to help the USFS plan for future remediation of hazardous openings and contamination.