California’s Abandoned Mine Lands Program Fact Sheet

The Abandoned Mine Lands Unit

The Department of Conservation’s Abandoned Mine Lands Unit (AMLU) implements a field program to inventory abandoned mines, provide a preliminary assessment of any hazards observed, and remediate hazards on public lands to preserve and protect human life and safety and any associated wildlife and cultural values (visit us at www.consrv.ca.gov/OMR/abandoned_mine_lands).

Every year, someone is hurt or killed in an accident on abandoned mine lands. The AMLU’s "Stay Out - Stay Alive!" message is part of a national public awareness campaign to warn children and adults about the dangers of exploring and playing near abandoned mines. Abandoned mines can also be sources of mercury contamination and other environmental hazards. To report an abandoned mine in California, call the AMLU hotline at 1-877-OLD-MINE.

The AMLU estimates that approximately 47,000 abandoned mine sites containing 165,000 mine features* exist statewide, 39,400 (84%) sites have physical hazards (more than 62,000 features are hazardous openings), and 67% of abandoned mine sites are on federal land.

- A feature is a single human-made object or disturbance associated with mining, such as a shaft or adit (vertical or horizontal opening), tailings, machinery and facilities. A mine can be comprised of one or more features.

The AMLU has completed site inventories and remediation projects throughout California (see map, page 2).
- Inventories: More than 3,000 sites and 29,000 features since 1997.

The AMLU also convenes the AML Forum, a quarterly venue for the public and agencies to discuss abandoned mine issues (see www.consrv.ca.gov/OMR/abandoned_mine_lands/amlu_forum.htm).

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The Department of Conservation’s mission is to balance today’s needs with tomorrow’s challenges and foster intelligent, sustainable, and efficient use of California’s energy, land, and mineral resources.

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