

Riches from the Earth

The mineral resources found on public lands help to keep our country running smoothly. From computers to toothpaste to your bicycle—almost every product you can think of contains minerals. Chances are at least some of these minerals came from public lands. There's a good chance, too, that the electricity you use every day comes from a coal-powered plant. And it's America's public lands that supply much of the country's coal.

Managing all these resources is a tough job. We need the minerals, but the process of getting them out of the earth can damage the land and water and create other hazards. That's why BLM tries to make sure that mining companies follow strict rules that help protect the environment. Companies have to plan their operations carefully, choose the least damaging mining methods, and repair the land afterward.

Some of the biggest hazards come from mines that are no longer in use. Abandoned mines pose safety hazards to people visiting public lands.

People can get lost or trapped, be overcome by poisonous gases, or fall down a mine shaft.

Abandoned mines also may leak dangerous materials into the land and water for years.

BLM is working to clean up and close down abandoned mines. In the meantime, if you come across an abandoned mine:

STAY OUT AND STAY ALIVE!

