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The Sierra Nevada is home to great trails, but also lots of naturally occurring metals - including gold, **and others like lead and arsenic that are harmful to human health.**

Many of the roads and trails we use on public lands started out as access to mines.

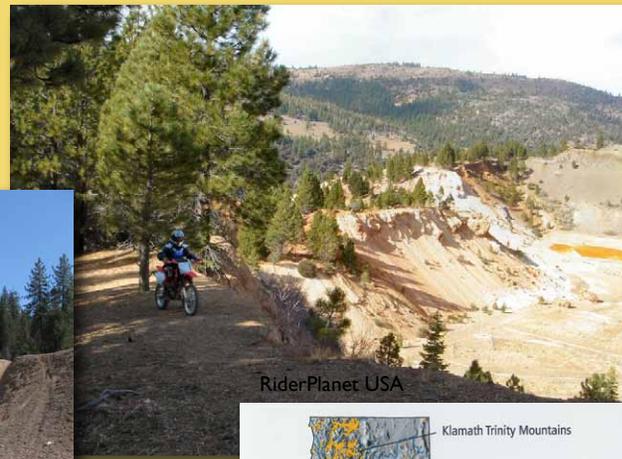
Over the last 150 years, **rock was mined, crushed, and leftover crushed rock (called mine tailings or waste rock) was left around the mine.**



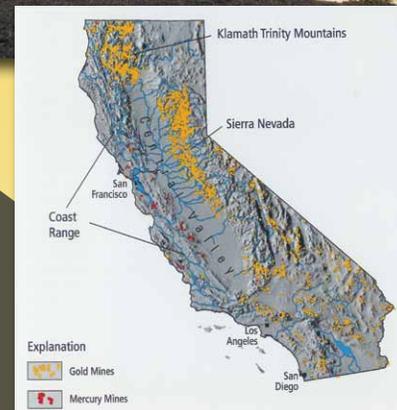
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**You are much more likely to be exposed to arsenic, lead or asbestos from crushed rock at abandoned mines during dusty conditions.**



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Today, there are nearly 47,000 old mines in California.

## What can I do?

- **Know your trails** - stay away from abandoned mines and crushed rock piles
- Avoid riding in dusty conditions
- Avoid riding in someone else's dust
- Avoid riding on loose materials near abandoned mines since these can have more toxic chemicals and can create more dust
- Make your voice heard! Raise the issue of abandoned mines to family, friends, clubs, and your legislators

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CA Dept. of Conservation

## Stay Out, Stay Alive!

In addition to toxic exposure hazards, **you can be killed or seriously injured by entering an abandoned mine.** Dangerous physical features include concealed holes, toxic gases, and unstable tunnels. For more information, visit [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov)



## If you ride in the Sierra, you need to know about abandoned mines.

### Arsenic, Lead and Asbestos

High levels of arsenic, lead and asbestos can be found at old mine sites. These materials are known to cause serious health problems including cancer, heart disease, and child development problems.

The main way you can be exposed to these chemicals is by breathing dust, or getting dirt in your mouth or on your skin.

### Be aware of your dirt.

- Dust you make when riding can affect people riding behind you, or camping nearby.
- Mud or dust on your clothes can be tracked into your car or your home, where other people can be exposed.
- Even if they don't go riding with you, kids may be exposed to dirt on your clothes or in your vehicle. They are extremely sensitive to toxics, especially lead - and love to put things in their mouths!

### Don't risk your health.

More studies still need to be done to learn how these chemicals may be affecting people who recreate around abandoned mines. The facts we have now show that there's good reason to take precautions to protect yourself and your family.



## Gold Rush Impacts

The footprint of the California Gold Rush stretches from the Sierra to the sea and includes the widespread distribution of toxics such as mercury, arsenic and lead.

Since 2006, The Sierra Fund has worked to address the legacy impacts of the Gold Rush in order to improve resiliency in our region.

Special thanks to RiderPlanet USA (www.riderplanet.com), Chris Collard of Overland Journal, and CA Department of Conservation (www.conservation.ca.gov ) for use of photos.

## About The Sierra Fund

The Sierra Fund's mission is to restore ecosystem and community resiliency in the Sierra Nevada region.

[www.sierrafund.org](http://www.sierrafund.org)

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# Abandoned Mines, Dust ...



and  
You

*what you should know  
about recreating safely  
in the Sierra Nevada*

*Addressing Gold Rush Impacts  
in the Sierra Nevada*