

Smith River Collaborative

FOR THE MEETING OF MARCH 28, 2023

TO: Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Grant Werschkull, Acting Chair of the Smith River Collaborative

DATE: March 21, 2023

SUBJECT: Letter to Forest Supervisor Ted McArthur re Remediation of Legacy Mines

RECOMMENDATION:

The Natural Resource Goal Committee met on March 16 to review this subject and recommends sending the attached letter to Forest Supervisor Ted McArthur.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

Legacy mines in the Smith River National Recreation Area (SRNRA) pose a serious threat to the drinking water of downstream communities in Del Norte County. Over 90 legacy mine sites containing hazardous mine waste have been inventoried, assessed and prioritized as to the need to address contaminants. Hazards include toxic levels of arsenic and various metallic ores. A cluster of priority sites are located in the headwaters of Rowdy Creek which is an important municipal water source for the Smith River community. The attached a map highlights many of the high priority legacy mines that require remediation.

Former Supervisor Gerry Hemmingsen was a founding Co-Chair of the Smith River Collaborative (SRC) which has been a successful partnership of nine stakeholder entities including Del Norte County, local and regional environmental groups (Friends of Del Norte, Klamath Forest Alliance/EPIC, and Smith River Alliance), Tribes (Elk Valley Rancheria and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation), the Del Norte Fire Safe Council (FSC), and the American Forest Resource Council/CA Forestry Association --- all dedicated to improving forest and aquatic health and priority recreation infrastructure within the SRNRA. Since 2016, the SRC in partnership with staff from the SRNRA and Six Rivers National Forest have secured several million dollars in grants from state and federal funding sources for priority projects.

County of Del Norte letterhead

March 28, 2023

Ted McArthur, Forest Supervisor
Six River National Forest
1330 Bayshore Way
Eureka, CA 95501

SUBJECT: Mine Abatement and Protecting Community Water Supplies

Dear Ted:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the problem of legacy mines in the Smith River National Recreation Area (NRA) and to ask for your help in addressing this threat to our communities and the Smith River.

Across the NRA, over 90 legacy mine sites containing hazardous mine waste have been inventoried, assessed and prioritized as to the need to address contaminants. Some of these legacy mine sites are located in the headwaters of Rowdy Creek which is an important municipal water source to the Smith River community. Other inventoried sites are located in the Smith River's North and Middle Fork watersheds upstream of water intakes for the Gasquet Community Services District, Big Rock Community Services District and the City of Crescent City.

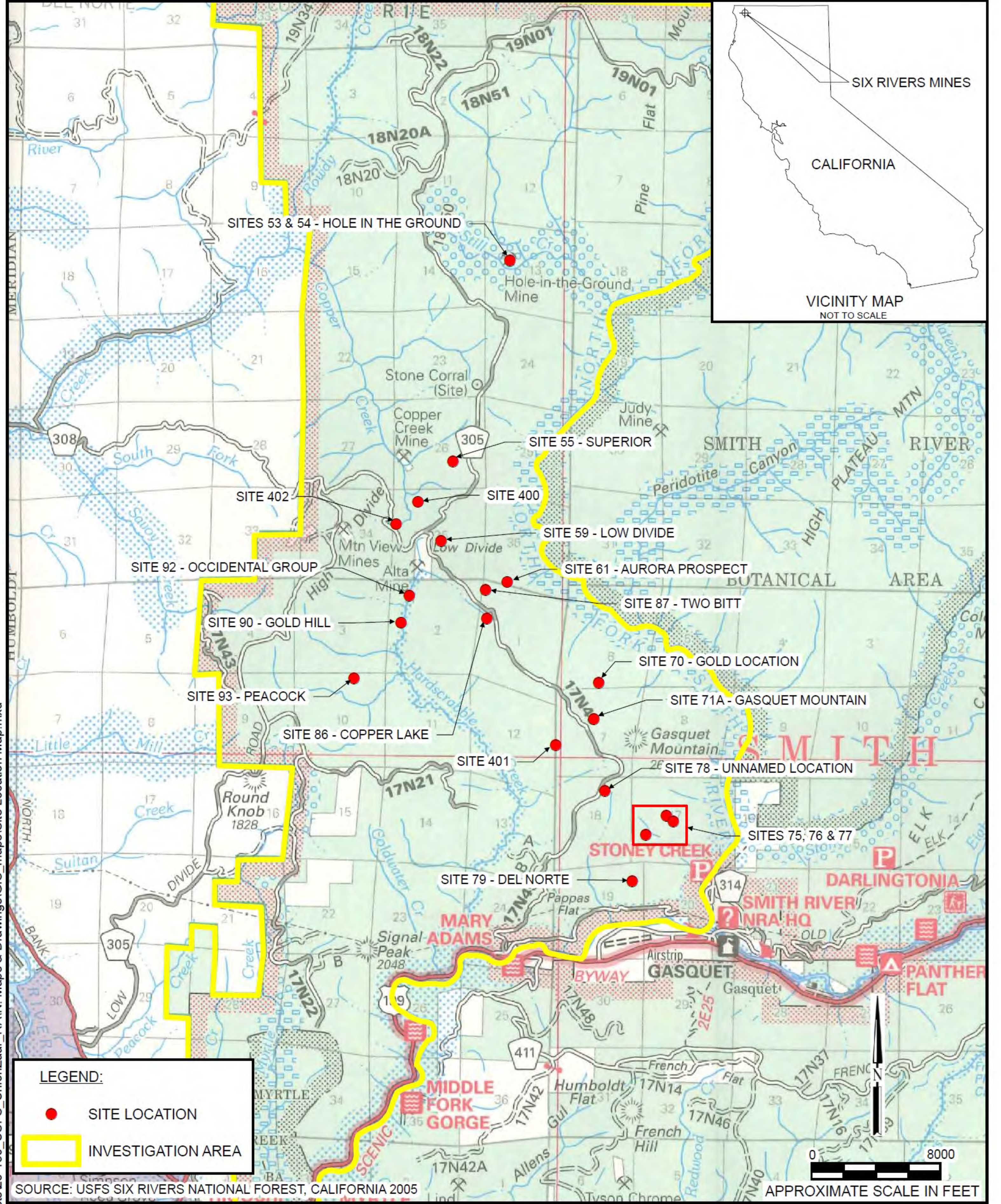
Maintaining our high-quality drinking water is extremely important to our rural communities. Of course, we're also concerned about potential impacts to fisheries and the environment.

Thank you in advance for working with us and the Smith River Collaborative to secure funding to remediate the legacy mines that pose the greatest threat to our communities and the Smith River.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrin Short, Chair

cc: Regional Forester, Jennifer Eberlien
Representative Jared Huffman, U.S. Congress
Senator Alex Padilla, U.S. Senate



Engineering/Remediation Resources Group, Inc.
115 Sansome Street, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 395-9974

CLIENT:	USDA FOREST SERVICE
LOCATION:	UNION-ZAAR MINE SMITH RIVER, CA

DESIGNED BY:	JJC 8-12-2009
CHECKED BY:	CG 9-2-2009
PE/PG:	CG 9-2-2009

SIX RIVERS MINES SITE LOCATION MAP				
ERRG PROJECT NO.	REV. NO.	SHEET	OF	FIG NO.
28-130				

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