

What is the impact of  
Mining Toxics  
on  
**locally held public lands?**

# Locally held public lands

- Cities
- Counties
- Irrigation Districts



CHAMPION MINE, NEVADA CITY MINING DISTRICT

# Ecosystem and Human Health Impacts

- Mine wastes are not contained on site they :
  - > can be transported downstream by erosion events
  - > can accumulate in fish
- People use these lands for recreation because they are often what is remaining as open space

# Growth in the Sierra

- As the Sierra grows there is greater demand for the limited open space
- More people will be exposed to these toxins
- Development has the potential to spread the contamination if it is not addressed

# EPA Brownfields Program

- ◉ Community wide assessment grant to the City of Nevada City and Friends of Deer Creek
- ◉ Cost effective and community driven
- ◉ The Goal is to:
  - > Return public lands to beneficial uses such as open space for recreation
  - > Improve the water quality in Deer Creek

# Water Quantity and Quality

- Hydraulic mining debris is still being washed down stream
- It gets trapped behind reservoirs
- Reservoir maintenance requires that these sediments be dredged on a regular basis to maintain water storage space

# Reservoirs and Mining Toxics

- Reservoirs provide a unique opportunity to address mining toxins that have moved off site because:
  - > receive non-point source pollution from upstream
  - > a managed environment where mining toxins accumulate

# Combie Reservoir Project

- The Nevada Irrigation District plans to test a new technology that can remove mercury from sediment
- If successful it could be applied to reservoirs across the Sierra
- Goal is to:
  - > Maintain water storage
  - > Improve water quality



# Recommendations

- Provide Resources to local governments to address mining toxics
  - > Support Sierra cities so that they can assess and remediate abandoned mines
  - > Support local irrigation districts so that they can implement new technologies to remediate mining toxins trapped behind reservoirs
- Promote informed land use planning so that:
  - > Mining toxins do not continue to spread
  - > People are not unnecessarily exposed
  - > No further harm is done to Ancestral tribal lands

# Take home message

- ◉ The devastating effects of the Gold Rush continue to impact the Sierra:
  - > Cultural
  - > Environmental
  - > Health and Safety

The people of the Sierra are ready....