

**Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe
Timbisha Shoshone Tribe**

**California Native Plant Society
California Native Plant Society -
Bristlecone Chapter
California Wilderness Coalition
Conservation Lands Foundation**

**Center for Biological Diversity
Friends of the Inyo
National Parks Conservation Association
Sierra Club
Western Watersheds Project**

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Contact:

Kris Hohag, (760) 920-3389, kris.hohag@sierraclub.org

Bryan Hatchell, (336) 307-6745, bryan@friendsoftheinyo.org

MINING COMPANY THREATENS TRIBAL RESOURCES IN CALIFORNIA DESERT

Phase 1 of the exploratory mining project has exceeded permitted acreage and wrongly characterizes drilling site as containing “low archaeological sensitivity”

BISHOP, CA — A Canadian gold exploration company, K2 Gold, has completed Phase 1 of an exploratory drilling project on traditional homelands of the Paiute-Shoshone and Timbisha Shoshone, on the doorstep of the area commonly known as Death Valley National Park.

Following Phase 1, local tribes and advocates were alarmed to discover that K2 Gold exceeded acreage allotted by the Bureau of Land Management. K2 Gold’s [project update](#) announced the company established 17 drill holes, despite the fact that they were permitted to drill 16 holes. Subsequent monitoring of the drill sites by Friends of the Inyo and a local chapter of the Sierra Club also revealed that the total impact of the drill sites comprises .6 acres, which is triple the size of their permit.

“We are incredibly frustrated, but not surprised, to learn that K2 Gold violated their permit and that the impacts of the exploratory drilling project went beyond what was allowed,” **said Kathy Bancroft, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe.** “The disrespect of our land is unacceptable. Everything K2 Gold promised has proven to be untrue. We will stand in the way of any future exploration or mining project.”

The company’s update also incorrectly characterizes the drill sites locations as having “low archaeological sensitivity.” According to local tribal representatives, the drill sites at Conglomerate Mesa are located among significant cultural resources including pinyon pine nut gathering sites, hunting grounds, mule deer migration routes, potential burial sites, and numerous individual artifacts.

K2 Gold's Perdito Exploration Project (also known as 'Mojave Gold Project') is located in Conglomerate Mesa, which is the homeland of the Timbisha Shoshone and Paiute Shoshone Tribes. Local and [federal officials](#), conservation groups, business owners, and local residents also oppose mining and drilling on Conglomerate Mesa.

"Conglomerate Mesa is used by tribes native to Timbisha/Death Valley, and those in Payahuunadü, also known as the Owens Valley, for traditional cultural uses, including hunting, and pinyon nut gathering," said **Barbara Durham, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe**. "The entire Timbisha Shoshone Tribal Council opposes this project. If it continues, it will permanently scar the ancestral lands and traditional territories of the Timbisha Shoshone and Paiute Shoshone Tribes."

K2 Gold's update also [claims](#) that the company has "engag[ed] and inform[ed] neighboring tribes of the activities at the site." According to local tribal leaders, the company has engaged with tribes to an extent, but ultimately the company has ignored tribes' concerns and suggestions to avoid destruction to these important lands.

"It is unacceptable that K2 Gold has done little to consult and work with Tribes on this project," said **Kris Hohag, citizen of the Bishop Paiute Tribal Nation and Senior Organizing Representative with the Sierra Club**. "We stand with Tribal leaders and allies who are rightfully calling the company out for ignoring local concerns."

The company is expected to begin Phase 2 of drilling exploration early next year. Following exploration, they could sell the rights to another company to develop an industrial-scale, cyanide "heap leach" gold mine in Conglomerate Mesa. Cyanide heap leach mining uses cyanide to extract gold from the earth and poses [significant hazards to local residents, plants and animals](#). Further, cyanide leach mining is very water intensive and uses hundreds of millions (even billions) of gallons of water. Advocates assert that there is not enough water available in the area for an industrial mine.

Conglomerate Mesa lies on the traditional homelands of the Paiute-Shoshone and Timbisha Shoshone, one mile from Death Valley National Park. The region comprises approximately 22,500 acres of public lands that are designated as California Desert National Conservation Lands and an Area of Critical Environmental Concern for their cultural significance, biodiversity, and recreation opportunities. Threatened Joshua trees, Inyo rock daisies and a number of other sensitive plant species call the Mesa home. Visitors enjoy hiking, striking valley views, camping, backpacking, hunting, photography, stargazing and more.

For ongoing updates on Conglomerate Mesa visit protectconglomeratemesa.com.

Background on the Conglomerate Mesa Coalition

The Conglomerate Mesa Coalition comprises a diverse group of organizations, tribal nations, and local businesses that support the immediate protection of Conglomerate Mesa for the land's cultural, historical, conservation, and recreation values from extractive industries like mining. These entities also oppose all mining activities by K2 Gold on Conglomerate Mesa. For more information about the Conglomerate Mesa Coalition, [click here](#).

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