

Roads, Recreation, and Mining: Some Impacts on Native Bees

Habitat destruction is a major source of loss of native bees - indeed, of most other native species as well.

- Roads, recreation (e.g., developed and dispersed campsites, facilities), and mining all occupy various portions of our public lands, eliminating space for native flowers and nesting sites.
- Loss of habitat often includes areas accessed by humans surrounding the particular formal footprint of roads (e.g., off-route travel) and recreation and mining sites.
- The loss of habitat may be for decades or more, given the economic investments humans have made in particular mining, road, or recreation infrastructure.
- If mining eventually ceases at a site after minerals, oil, or gas have been extracted, reclamation rarely replicates the diversity of vegetation that had been initially removed, and former populations of pollinators may not return.
- Dirt roads may sometimes support underground nesting for bees that prefer open sites, but if tires dig into the subsoil, e.g., during a muddy season, the nests may be destroyed.
- Vegetation removal or soil disturbance by site construction associated with roads, recreation sites, or mining often facilitates the spread of invasive species, occupying native plant habitat.

■ Mary O'Brien, May 2021.