

# Steer Clear

## ACTIVITY 4

### **Objective:**

To understand hazards of abandoned mines.

### **Vocabulary:**

subsidence, winze

### **Materials:**

- Posterboard as needed
- *Steer Clear* song
- Research materials
- Computers

### **Check for Understanding:**

Have the students read their stories or essays to the class or present their ad campaigns.

### **Extensions:**

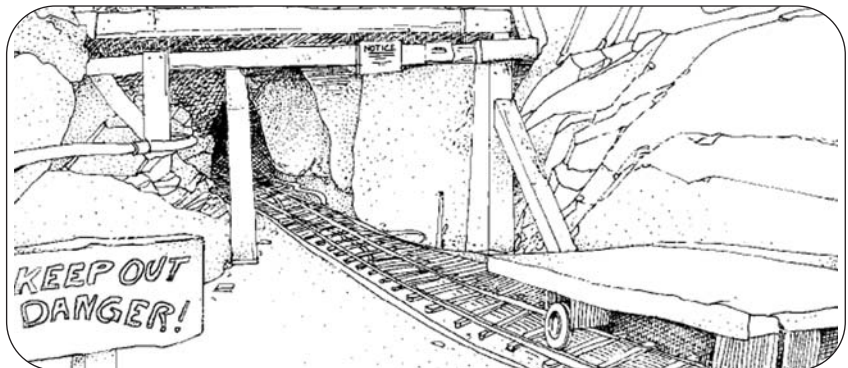
- Students could create their final projects using presentation software such as "Powerpoint" or "Hyperstudio."
- Contact your state's Department of Natural Resources for abandoned mine safety information specific to your area. Information often includes coloring books for lower grade students.

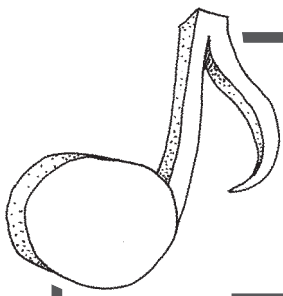
### **Introduction:**

Abandoned mine land may be hazardous to people and the environment.

Some problems that occur with abandoned mines are:

- becoming lost or trapped in a complex network of underground passages
- old unstable buildings and machinery
- animals—rattlesnakes, bats, bears, mountain lions, snakes, spiders, scorpions and insects
- cave-ins—surrounding rocks weakened and fractured by blasting used to create mines. Vibrations from walking or even speaking can cause an abandoned mine to cave in.
- falls—vertical shafts (the number one cause of death and injury in abandoned mines)
- high walls—prone to collapse
- rotting wood—support timbers, headframes, ladders, pump jacks and other related structures
- subsidence—a sinking down of a part of the earth's crust
- toxic mine air—pockets of deadly air and gases or a lack of oxygen because abandoned mines are not ventilated. Bad air is often odorless and tasteless.
- undetonated explosives—old dynamite, blasting caps, black powder
- water hazards—abandoned mines, quarries often flooded
- winzes—steeply inclined shafts often disguised by water





# Steer Clear

## Procedures:

1. Ask the students the following questions:
  - What would you do if you came across an old, abandoned mine?
  - Are there any precautions you should take when approaching an old mine?
2. Play *Steer Clear* song for the students and have them sing along.
3. Discuss with the students some of the hazards they might find in an abandoned mine. Make a list on the board or on an overhead. Have the students take notes.
4. Assign the students one of the following projects:
  - Write a fictional story about someone who stumbles across an abandoned mine.
  - Write a persuasive essay about staying away from mines.
  - Create an ad campaign warning about the dangers of abandoned mines.

The students are to use their notes and additional research, if needed, to complete the projects.

