

At the first meeting of Defenders of the Black Hills in August, 2002, as we went around the room, each person spoke about what they could bring to the organization. One woman, who was disabled, said she couldn't do much but she could pray. Since that time, we have strongly encouraged prayer as one of the strongest things we could do since we are battling such formidable foes.

At a later meeting that first year, we also listed a number of issues and stopped at 32. We knew we needed to prioritize. In the prioritizing process, we decided that if an issue was already being addressed by others: organizations, alliances, or groups of people, then we would try to increase the awareness of another issue. For example, at that time the expansion of the DM&E Railroad had a number of opponents, while the shooting range near Bear Butte was just getting started. We chose to concentrate on Bear Butte and a Prayer Gathering in Feb. 2003, began our efforts. The shooting range was stopped in eleven months. Was it the prayers? Was it the pro bono lawyer? Was it the greed and illegalities that were exposed?

Another way we chose to operate within Defenders was when someone made a recommendation for an activity, could that person lead the activity. Often times, recommendations are made for someone else to do. As all volunteers, Defenders did not have the staff to carry out all the recommendations. However, much has been accomplished in the past nine years in waking up the public to many of these issues. Thank you to all of you who have supported the work with your financial donations, your physical presence, your research and information, and especially the prayers.

Black Hills

1. Black Hills Prayer Gathering for June 18th postponed. Due to many activities occurring in the summer months, particularly prayer ceremonies, the Prayer Gathering scheduled for June 18th has been postponed until **Oct . 7th, at 10:00 AM at Sioux Park off of Canyon Lake Drive, Rapid City, SD.**

However, as one elder encouraged us, we can pray where we are, all the time. Please continue your prayers for the good health of Mother Earth and the sacred places, especially the Black Hills.

2. Update on logging near Harney Peak Harney Peak is one of the sacred places in the Black Hills and was written about in the book, Black Elk Speaks. It is under the management of the US Forest Service. For the past few years, Defenders has been proposing the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve and an additional area of the Black Hills under the US Forest Service to be designated the Okawita Paha National Park (formerly Great Sioux Nation International Peace Park.) This designation would merely transfer management from the Forest Service to the National Parks with co-management with the Great Sioux Nation. It would not address the Treaty issue of land ownership, but hopefully would protect and preserve the environment as a sacred landscape.

There are two parts to this. First, the lawsuit filed by Friends of the Norbeck to stop the logging of 5,000 acres of old-growth pine forest in the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve, which is within Defenders proposed Okawita Paha National Park, has been appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Briefings should be completed by the end of July, 2011. Defenders is an ally of Friends and assisted in the lawsuit, but is not a Plaintiff.

Second, the Forest Service is proposing to log virtually every acre in the non-Norbeck parts of the proposed Okawita Paha National Park under what they call the Vestal Timber Sale. Such logging and burning will desecrate this entire area and destroy ancient prayer sites, some not even identified by the Forest Service. Defenders submitted strong opposition to this project on May 30, 2011.

How you can help You can help support the designation of the Okawita Paha National Park by getting only 10 signatures on the attached petition. Please copy the petition and get as many signatures as possible. ([click here to download the petition](#)) Return them to Defenders of the Black Hills, PO Box 2003, Rapid City, SD 57709. For more information go to http://friends-of-norbeck.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network . Hopefully, all of our efforts will help to protect this sacred area. Thank you.

3. Documentary on the Black Hills South Dakota Public Broadcasting aired a documentary on the Pine Beetle infestation which is the reason given by the Forest Service for increasing the logging in a wilderness area. Brian Brademeyer, Defenders Treasurer and Friends of the Norbeck Executive Director is also in the film. It is available on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjLGyyafm9E>

Uranium

1. Powertech Uranium Mining Company For many years, we have tried to stop this company from adding more uranium exploratory wells to the 4,000 already present and beginning In Situ Leach mining for uranium in the southwestern Black Hills. We attended the meetings at the state capitol in Pierre on drafting regulations. Our concerns were blatantly ignored while the uranium companies were treated like royalty. We fought the Board of Minerals in court. Then this past winter, even though the SD regulations were influenced by the uranium companies, Powertech went to the SD legislature which passed a bill that didn't require Powertech to comply with SD regulations. Powertech had failed twice to answer the safety questions raised by the SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources and didn't want to try again. Fortunately, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has now turned down Powertech's application at the federal level because of safety issues.

From Coloradoan.com:

Feds suspend Powertech uranium mine permitting

10:59 AM, May. 10, 2011 Written by Bobby Magill

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has suspended its safety review of a proposed Powertech Uranium Corp. uranium mine in South Dakota because the agency wasn't satisfied with Powertech's explanation for how it will keep the mine from harming public health and safety.

Powertech USA President Richard Clement said in April that the company is temporarily pulling its staff away from the proposed Centennial Project uranium mine northeast of Fort Collins [CO] to work on the federal permitting process for its proposed Dewey-Burdock mine in South Dakota's Black Hills. In a May 6 letter, the NRC told Powertech it will be suspending the permitting process because Powertech was unable to answer public health and safety questions about the Dewey-Burdock mine. The letter said Powertech couldn't adequately explain how it would contain uranium production fluids at the mine site and keep surface water free of contamination.

We believe that proceeding with the review at this time is not the most effective use of scarce resources, because Powertechs responses to the NRC's requests for additional information about public health and safety provisions were inadequate. The timeline for the Dewey-Burdock safety review and federal licensing has been extended indefinitely depending on how Powertech answers the NRC's questions and the availability of NRC staff, NRC spokesman David McIntyre said..

2. Crow Butte Uranium Mine Update People in Germany are soon going to be learning about all of the problems of radioactive pollution in our region. On June 2nd, Andreas Geldner, a reporter for Stuttgarter Zeitung newspaper (readership is 2 million), and Ronnie Farley, a photo journalist from New York City, toured the Crow Butte ISL mine near Crawford, NB, with Professor Hannon LaGarry from Oglala Lakota College, Charmaine White Face, Coordinator for Defenders, and a number of students. Dr. LaGarry stated that the geology in the area is such that there is no way to contain the fluids being used to dissolve the uranium. The radioactive dissolved materials are coming out of faucets from the homes of people living in Crawford and near the Mine site. The Crow Butte mine has had a number of violations including an overflow of one of the waste ponds which contain highly radioactive waste water. However, they continue to try to expand their operations.

3. Abandoned Mines Petition If we can wake up the world to what is happening in our Region with uranium, maybe we will get some relief from the radioactive pollution that continues to contaminate the air, water, and environment not only of this region but the world. The radiation coming out of one of the 103 mines* in the Cave Hills-Slim Buttes area is 4 times as strong as that being allowed to fall on the children from the Fukushima Nuclear Plants in Japan. This is in the middle of North America and we can't get anyone to do anything about it. We are trying again, to wake up the world to Americas Secret Chernobyl.

[Attached is a petition to Michelle Obama](#) asking her to use her influence for the cleanup of the abandoned uranium mines in this Region. We are working with another foundation called Hawk Wing Lodge from Connecticut on this petition. They are also getting it on other online petition sources. Please, copy and sign it and get your friends and neighbors to sign, then send it back to us. The more people that sign, the better our chances of some action. Thank you.

[*A recent study by Liliias Jarding, Ph. D. entitled Uranium Impacts in Lakota Territory shows the increase from 89 to 103 abandoned uranium mines in the Cave Hills area alone. Her study has shown more than 2100 abandoned uranium mines in Wyoming. If you wish a copy of the study,

please let us know at bhdefenders@msn.com and we can email it to you.]

Bear Butte Update The SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources Board of Minerals originally granted an oil well drilling permit to Nakota Energy, LLP, in Nov. 2010, for oil well drilling one and a half miles west-northwest of Bear Butte. However, the SD Historic Preservation Officer objected as the SD laws protecting cultural, archaeological and historic sites were not obeyed. In April and May, the Board conduct more hearings on the cultural, archaeological, and historic perspectives. After all the testimony, the Board revoked the original permit and granted a new one with stricter rules. As Bear Butte is a National Historic Landmark, no wells can be drilled in the 300 acres within the National Historic Landmark boundaries. Only 5 wells can be drilled and they must not be within view from SD Highway 79. Nakota Energy plans on doing horizontal drilling under the mountain which is an extinct volcano. Traditional Tituwan prophesy says Bear Butte will rise up one day. Drilling under the mountain is not recommended.

Defenders position has always been for no development within a 5 mile radius of Bear Butte. Furthermore, Defenders asked the National Park Service to conduct National hearings on this national landmark, but the National Park Service said that was out of their scope even though by law they are required to protect this national landmark. Prayers for this sacred mountain are once again needed.

Black Hills Pow Wow Table and Annual Raffle

The annual Black Hills Pow Wow will be held Oct. 7,8,& 9. We will be tabling at the Pow Wow again and anyone interested in helping at the table, please let us know via mail, email, or a phone call. Please leave a message if no one can take your call. Let us know the date and time you can help. Remember, we are all volunteers.

Also, raffle items are needed for our annual Fall Raffle. Call or mail about your donation. We would like to get the Raffle started as soon as possible. Thank you.

Next Defenders Meeting

Defenders next meeting will be **Oct. 8th, beginning with the Prayer Gathering for the Black Hills at Sioux Park at 10:00AM**. Potluck lunch will be served in the Coffee Room at St. Isaac Jogues Church, 221 Knollwood Drive, Rapid City, SD, followed by a meeting.

The Sioux Nation Treaty Council will meet on **Saturday, Sept. 10**, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM in the Hall at the Mother Butler Center, 221 Knollwood Drive, Rapid City.