

Defenders of the Black Hills **He Sapa Onakijin**

Hello Defenders,

Many urgent situations are occurring and deadlines for comments are very soon. Please consider making copies and then signing the enclosed comment form and mailing it immediately! Ask your friends and relatives to also sign and send a comment. The more people that participate, the better the chances of protecting and preserving some of the environment. Thank you. Charmaine White Face, Coordinator

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National Guard Training Camp
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There is an urgent matter that will affect the people of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and others with the contaminaton of the water and air. The South Dakota Army National Guard is planning on moving into the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands near the Cheyenne River and the northwestern border of the Reservation. We are very concerned about this project for the safety of the people as well as the destruction to this fragile ecosystem.

The reason given for the Army National Guard wanting to send 5,000 men into this area by June 1st, is because it is supposed to be like the terrain in Afghanistan. They will be doing their war games in an area west of Highway 44 to Highway 40 and west to French Creek. The French Creek area is the site of a massacre of our people that occurred just 3 weeks before the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890. Only one survivor lived to tell what happened. As far as I know, that site is not protected nor is it mentioned in the National Guard's Environmental Assessment. These two highways are also the most used roads by the people from the Pine Ridge Reservation to Rapid City.

We have until **April 12, 2012**, to submit comments. A comment form is included, or write a letter to:

SDARNG Environmental Office, ATTN: Robert D. Grams, Environmental Program, 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702-8186

South Rochford Road (Pesla)

Another URGENT matter is the South Rochford Road, or Pesla Road. A Public Scoping Meeting to begin the environmental processes is planned with informal one-on-one discussions with the Pennington County Commissioners and Roads Department, the SD Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and HDR Engineering. The plans are to blacktop this road by Pesla, a major sacred site in the Black Hills. A World Day of Prayer was held there a number of years ago. At this meeting is when all concerns need to be presented. Please try to attend and ask any question you wish.

The Public Scoping Meeting will be held Thursday, April 19, 2012, from 5:00 - 7:00 PM

at the Hill City High School, 488 Main Street, Hill City, SD.

Keystone & XL Pipeline

South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD, recently hosted an American History Conference on March 28th with the Keystone and the XL Pipeline the topics. The environmental portion was covered by Charmaine White Face from Defenders. Ben Rhodd, a Potawatomi/Choctaw Archaeologist, talked about the values being exhibited by the Pipeline. Tim Mentz, former Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, showed pictures of the desecration to graves and sacred sites caused by the building of the Pipeline, and Russell Eagle Bear, Rosebud Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Officer talked about the lawsuit filed by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and other legal ramifications. All speakers encouraged people to get involved,

change their lifestyles, and realize the danger in oil production.

Interestingly, if the Pipeline is not built, the railroads are getting ready to haul oil tankers which are already moving hundreds of thousands of barrels out of the Williston Basin in North Dakota. All of this only continues to contribute to global warming and increases the amount of carbon in the atmosphere which is enclosed in the stratosphere. We are living in a fishbowl with more and more carbon oxides lining the outermost edge.

Black Hills Update

The lawsuit to stop logging in the Norbeck Wld Life Area is now at the level of the Supreme Court. The logging stopped at the end of February to resume next Fall. Comments that were submitted on the Vestal Project, which is in the Okawita Paha area, are still in the review stage. One of our members hand delivered a copy of the Okawita Paha petition to Michelle Obama on her recent visit to Mount Rushmore.

Uranium Update

Although hundreds of petitions and letters have been sent to Michelle Obama asking for her intervention to clean up the more than 3,000 abandoned uranium mines in the Region, no response has been received to date. There is a federal law that might be used for the mitigation of the destruction of sacred sites, and we are looking for an attorney and the funds needed to try to get these major environmental disasters into federal court. If you know an attorney that might want to help, please ask them. We are also in dire need of funds, so any little bit can help.

Also, an Australian uranium mining company, Strata, is appealing a decision that will allow two environmental groups to participate in an application for a new uranium mine 10 miles west of Mahto Tipila (Devil's Tower). The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will decide whether the two groups can participate.

New Gold Mine in Spearfish Canyon

Gary Heckenliable, from ACTION for the Environment, informed us of another new gold mine to be built on the rim of Spearfish Canyon called the Valentine Mine. It will be a strip mine on the rim of one of the most beautiful canyons in the country. Until the environmental process begins, please send letters to the Rapid City Journal and the Black Hills Pioneer with your concerns.

Bear Butte Forum

The next forum on Bear Butte by the SD State Parks Div. will be held Sat., May 5th, from 8:30 to noon, Mountain Time, at the Sturgis Community Center, 1401 Lazelle St, Sturgis, SD.

Next Defenders Meeting

Defenders next meeting, weather permitting, will be Sat., June 23, 2012, starting at 1:00 PM. in the Coffee Room at St. Isaac Jogues Church, 221 Knollwood Drive, Rapid City, SD.

Others ways to help:

Our organization has always operated on the kindness and generosity of people. Although we look at grants for special projects, our general operating funds are currently very low. If you could help raise some funds for our general operations, we can continue this very needed work.

◆ Donations may be made at our website www.defendblackhills.org

hank you so much. Wopila tanka.

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Date: _____

SDARNG Environmental Office

ATTN: Robert D. Grams

Environmental Program

2823 West Main Street

Rapid City, SD 57702-8186

Re: Comments on the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands Environmental Assessment

In reference to the Environmental Assessment for the Army National Guard Annual Training Activities on the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands, Nebraska

National Forest, please consider completing a full Environmental Impact Study as the Environmental Assessment raises the following questions:

1. How will the soldiers be protected from the naturally occurring uranium that is exposed in some areas in this part of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands?
2. How will the soldiers be protected from the radioactive dust raised in the development of roads and other activities as the naturally occurring uranium and its 13 decay products, which are more radioactive than naturally occurring uranium, are so near the surface in this area?
3. How will the radioactive dust be stopped from flowing over the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and especially Red Shirt Village?
4. How will the ground water and surface water be protected from contamination with the naturally occurring uranium and other radioactive substances?
5. How will the ground water and surface water be protected from contamination from the ordnance used in the training activities?
6. Will the training activities be using depleted uranium in any form?
7. How will all the threatened and endangered species in this area be protected including flora which was not mentioned in the Environmental Assessment?
8. How will the French Creek Massacre site be protected?
9. How will other archaeological and cultural sites be protected?
10. How will the economics of Red Shirt Village be positively impacted when there is not even a store or post office in this small community?

Signed:

<p>_____

</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">Name and Address</p> <p>◆</p>