

Hello Everyone,

In the traditional culture of the Oceti Sakowin (Sioux people), when a meeting is held, during the Introduction time, people are allowed to talk as long as they want. As a young girl, I attended meetings like this. It took days to get through the Introductions, but at the end, all the items on the agenda were usually answered, as well as lots of other information given. That's what happened at this meeting. However, in order to alleviate the costs of the postal mailing, the information from the introductory remarks will be available on the website, and if you would like a written copy, please send a letter to the above address. The information will be sent to you.

John Long Sr. is 76 years and told many things that were told to him by his grandfather including: the massacre at Wounded Knee was a cover up for the assassination of Big Foot; the 1835 Conspiracy; a lot of information about the treaties beginning in 1850; the aboriginal land territory of the Sioux nation; about the Utes, the Cheyennes, and the Sioux living together and in Alaska and Canada; the contamination of the White River beginning in 1950; underground pollution in Pine Ridge village; and how the IRA governments misuse the Sioux Benefit so nothing stops the corruption.

This information is history from the Indian perspective, and gives a vastly different story. More elders, who might remember, need to give their information now, so it won't be lost. If you know any elders, please ask them about ancient history, or our version of history and write it down. Mr. Long has been giving his knowledge of our ancient history as well at many meetings. We will try to collect and write as much of this information as possible.

Others present also gave more detailed information about who they are and why their involvement with Defenders.

**Treasurer's Report:** As Brian was not at the meeting, a handout was available of the Annual Expenditures and Revenues including categories and notes for the past seven years. A copy is on the website.

Other handouts included:

- the 2003 Defenders' brochure and the 24 Issues listed then.
- A referendum in Meade County about a Road By-pass
- 8 Ways radioactive pollution affects the Northern Great Plains [included at the end of this message]
- Threatened sacred sites and burial grounds (excluding the Black Hills) [also included]

The last two handouts are included with this letter as there are so many issues.

**People are always wondering how they can help. So here is what many people do: If you are Native American, the first step is to pray and ask for direction and guidance. Everyone then can pick one from the lists included with this letter, or mentioned in the**

**agenda items.** The most important part is to make a commitment to work on that one issue, then make a plan on what you can do. Find out if there are any groups of people working on the same thing. Join them, or individually do what you can to raise awareness of the issue. You might even start a group just for that issue. Do it and know you have done something to help people, nature and the future. Thank you.

The following is a brief summary of the agenda items:

- There is planned burning in the Black Hills in the **Norbeck Wilderness Area** to protect Mount Rushmore. According to federal law, this is a violation being done by the U.S. Forest Service.
- Petitions are being planned to have SD vote on **banning Uranium mining** in the state. We will keep you informed of that effort led by Dakota Rural Action and Clean Water Alliance.
- The **Clean Up the Uranium Mines Campaign** is still proceeding. The final draft of a federal bill has been sent to Rep. Grijalva. Many other organizations have joined Defenders on this issue. Go to [www.cleanupthemin.org](http://www.cleanupthemin.org) for more information.
- A bill is urgently needed this legislative session in SD to protect the **Buffalo Gap National Grasslands** from the National Guard going in there to do their summer camps and stir up the Uranium. Although we were able to halt it with the Red Shirt community last summer at the last minute, there is still the threat that they will try again this coming June 1. If you know the Senator and Representatives from Shannon County, please ask them to pass a bill so the National Guard will not ever go into the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands near the Cheyenne River.

We have an old federal bill to Congress to protect all the Grasslands as Wilderness if anyone is interested. Concern was raised that more ATVs will be going into the Grasslands as the Forest Service bans them in the Forest. This will bring businesses on private land.

- There are plans to build a **by-pass road** from I-90 to Pleasant Valley Road and then across to SD Highway 34 for an alternate route to reach Sturgis. It won't be funded by federal or state money so the Meade County Commissioners plan on taxing the people of Meade County. Those living near Faith can vote in a referendum on March 3rd.
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the **Rare Earth Mine (radioactive) planned near Tipi Mahto** (aka Devil's Tower) that would destroy another sacred hill, will be out in June or July. Also we will discuss whether to have another Prayer Gathering there next June 21.
- The **water tests** for 3 of the 5 wells at Pine Ridge show high levels of Thorium as well as mined Uranium. A letter will be sent to the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council with recommendations. Also samples were brought and have been sent on to be tested for Uranium and Arsenic. If you want your water tested for free, please send it or bring it to me right away. The testing ends soon.

**The North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus (NAIPC)** meeting will be hosted by Defenders of the Black Hills on March 20, 21, and 22, 2015. The NAIPC is made up of organizations, universities and colleges, agencies, and others and take their recommendations

from this meeting to various agencies of the United Nations. People from all over Turtle Island will be coming to the sacred Black Hills during a sacred time, the Spring Equinox.

Registration, including a meal, will be on Friday evening, March 20th, with the NAIPC meetings on March 21 and 22 at United Tribes Technical College, Black Hills Learning Center, 321 Kansas City St, Rapid City. If any of you wish to sit in on these meetings, and even participate, I encourage you to register on Friday evening, and make your hotel reservations NOW as there is a big hockey tournament that weekend. Seating will be given to our visitors first, approximately 100. The room holds 200 people. The Alex Johnson Hotel will hold a rate of \$75 plus tax for those coming for NAIPC. It has free airport shuttles, and is 3 blocks from the meeting.

Also, we are looking for sponsors for the meals. These will be for 150 - 200 people. We will host 1 large dinner on Saturday evening during which time we will invite the whole community to a dinner and Round Dance to honor NAIPC. It's the same time as the Denver Pow Wow, so we are **looking for drum groups for the Round Dance**. Email me at bhdefenders@msn.com if you are a drum group and want to sing for us.

Finally, something happened at the meeting that has required me to include a letter that has been sent to the Sioux Nation Treaty Council. Five years ago, I received a very short letter in 2010 from a handful of people stating that I was not to call myself the Spokesperson for the Treaty Council. I responded that this is a lifetime appointment. They never came and talked to me. It was a total surprise and a shock as I considered these people to be my friends. However, the same letter was handed out at this last Defenders meeting, and so my response has to be made public.

It was hard for me to write the attached letter, but I realized I had to acknowledge and support the confidence and support given to me in 1994 by all the elders present at that meeting, by Tony Black Feather, the previous Spokesperson who went home in 2004, and also by the Spirits at Bear Butte in 2003. I hope you understand why my letter has to be made public now. I was the Coordinator for Defenders before I became the Spokesperson for the Treaty Council.

Submitted by Charmaine White Face (Zumila Wobaga), Coordinator

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## **8 WAYS RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION AFFECTS THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS**

**Uranium - 238** is a naturally occurring element that slowly disintegrates in 14 steps to a final, non-radioactive element known as Lead 206. The decay products in the 14 steps are just as radioactive, if not more, than U-238 itself. When these decay products are disturbed in any

way, they begin their unstoppable, expanding radioactive processes. Yet, uranium mining companies and governments continue to plan for new ways to mine uranium.

**1. Above Ground Detonations of Atomic Bombs in the Southwest** According to the National Cancer Institute, during the above ground detonations of atomic bombs in Nevada from 1951-1963, the radioactive fallout was spread throughout the United States and Canada. (See the Above Ground Detonation map at [www.defendblackhills.org](http://www.defendblackhills.org)) One of the radioactive contaminants, Iodine-131, was unintentionally inhaled and/or ingested by the children of that era in North America, who now have high rates of thyroid cancer and thyroid disease.

**2. Abandoned Uranium Mines and Prospects** According to information from the Environmental Protection Agency, 2,885 open pit uranium mines and prospects were dug in MT, WY, ND and SD in the 1950s & 60s. (See Abandoned Mines map at [www.defendblackhills.org](http://www.defendblackhills.org)) An additional 387 were also dug in Northern Colorado. The radioactive dust, and water runoff from those abandoned mines and prospects has been spreading throughout the region for the past 50 years causing high levels of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

**3. Abandoned Uranium Exploratory Wells** More than 10,000 uranium exploratory well holes, some large enough for a man to fall into, are located in SD, ND, and WY. These holes, 600 - 800 feet deep, were not capped, filled, or even marked. Cross contamination of aquifers with radioactive materials was discovered in studies in 1982.

**4. Abandoned ICBM Missile Silos and Radar Stations from the Cold War Era** In the 1950s and 60s, hundreds of missile silos and radar stations were built and operated in the Northern Great Plains. The US Air Force used small nuclear power plants in some of these remote stations to power the equipment. The US Air Force is still responsible for monitoring the sites although there is no way to control the underground radioactive pollution that is contaminating the aquifers in the region.

**5. Coal and Uranium** The geology of the Northern Great Plains Region shows that the area contains wide expanses of uranium which is often mixed in coal. The coal laced with uranium, which is mined in North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming, is sometimes burned locally, or shipped to power plants in the Eastern and Western parts of the United States. During the strip mining of the coal, radioactive dust and particles are released into the air and carried by the wind through the Northern Great Plains and to the South and Eastern parts of North America.

**6. Radon Gas** Radon gas is a tasteless, odorless, radioactive gas emitted naturally as one of the decay products of Uranium. In areas where uranium has been disturbed, whether in digging a foundation for a house, or in the natural movements of the Earth, radon gas may be emitted in the air, or through contaminated water. Lung cancer can begin when radon gas is breathed by human beings.

**7. Current and Planned Uranium Mining** In Situ Leach mining for uranium is being planned in the southwestern Black Hills by Azarga Uranium Mining Co., a Chinese corporation. Another Uranium company has also been approaching ranchers to secure leases in southwestern SD for future uranium mining. The Crow Butte ISL mine near Crawford, NB, has been operating since

the 1990s. It has already been proven that this type of mining only destroys aquifers with radioactive contamination.

**8. Radioactive Oil Waste in Western North Dakota** The current oil boom in western North Dakota in the Bakken Range is leaving radioactive oil waste being dumped all over the Region. Water runoff from these wastes is causing radioactive pollution of the land, the creeks, and the Missouri River.

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### **Threatened Sacred Sites and Burial Grounds**

(excluding the Black Hills)

**1. Buffalo Gap National Grasslands and French Creek Massacre site.** A few weeks before the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, more than 50 young men and women from the Pine Ridge Reservation, on a hunting trip, were massacred at the mouth of French Creek as it enters the Cheyenne River. The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands needs Wilderness Protection, and the French Creek Massacre Site needs cultural protection possibly through the Native American Graves Protection Act, or the Archaeological Resource Protection Act.

**2. Dewey-Burdock area north of Edgemont, SD** contains 169 Abandoned Uranium Mines, and also is an ancient Burial Grounds. Azarga Uranium Company plans on mining in this area despite the knowledge of the Burial Grounds. This area needs cultural protection under the Native American Graves Protection Act.

**3. Thunder Basin,** west of Newcastle, Wyoming, and the Black Hills contains the Black Thunder Coal Mine, the largest open pit coal mine in the U.S.A. This is also the birthplace of the thunders and is a sacred site to many Indigenous nations. Cultural site protection is greatly needed.

**4. Tipi Mahto (Bear Lodge aka Devil's Tower)** is surrounded by Uranium Mines, some old with plans for new ones. Strata Energy plans an ISL Uranium Mining operation at Oshoto, about 11 miles west, and a Rare Earth (radioactive) mine is planned to the south east of Tipi Mahto on another smaller, sacred mountain called Bull Hill. There needs to be a cultural protection area around Tipi Mahto for at least 50 miles in all directions to stop the radioactive pollution.

**5. Paha Mahto (Bear Butte)** currently has Nakota Energy horizontal drilling for oil a few miles from this sacred place. Again, cultural protection designation needs to be around Paha Mahto for at least 5 miles.

**6. Dear Medicine Rock near Lame Deer, MT,** contains numerous spirit writings very sacred to the Cheyenne and Sioux people. Sitting Bull's vision is also found on this sacred site. Coal mining to the north and east is located a few miles from this sacred place. The Carbon, Nitrogen, and Sulfur oxides come down as acid rain or snow on this sacred place and will destroy this sacred place. The site needs cultural protection designation.

**7. The Cave Hills and Slim Buttes** areas located in the northwest corner of South Dakota contain 103 Abandoned Uranium Mines and numerous oil wells. Innumerable burial and vision quest sites as well as spirit writing were destroyed in the mining process. However, some sites still exist although surrounded by radioactivity. These sites still need cultural protection.

**8. Cotteau Mines and Power Plant** near Beulah, ND, advertises as the largest lignite mine in deliveries. However, the Battle of Killdeer Mountain occurred near there on July 28-29, 1864 between Gen. Alfred Sully and the Isantee and Tituwan Oceti Sakowin (Sioux). More than 1,400 graves and 2 stone turtle effigies are also located in one of the surface strip mining area. Again cultural and graves protection needs to be given to this area.

There are many more cultural and burial sites in the 1868 Treaty Territory that need to be protected. This is a starting point for anyone wishing to work on protecting one of these places. Information was gathered by Defenders of the Black Hills, PO Box 2003, Rapid City, SD 57709.