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Jim Ruby, Executive Secretary  
Environmental Quality Council

July 30, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express my extreme concern over the plans to mine above the Sand Creek Canyon area.

Since early childhood I have enjoyed the wonders of Sand Creek. I first was introduced to the this sacred place in the early 1950's when my next door neighbor, brought me along to play with her granddaughter Sandra Larson. My neighbor played Bridge with other women at the Gene Sly cabin each week. I also was lucky to have many trips with my neighbors, Gene and Florence Sly, our family friends the Overpeck's, Mortimer's, Smiley's and the Snyder's. I benefited from hours of fun in the pristine waters of the creek, summing, fishing and enjoying the purity of this amazing stream. I recall an issue of National Sports Magazine, where Sand Creek was mentioned as the finest trout fishing stream in the North American continent. How proud I was that I loved this amazing stream and it now was mentioned in a National Magazine.

Now over 60 years later, having spent at least one week at Sand Creek each summer, I am saddened to learn of plans to mine at the head waters of the Canyon. I remember all too well the days when there was a stream outside of Deadwood that ran black with cyanide and being told by my parents it was due to the gold mine in Lead.

You see I was raised by a wonderful father who earned his living through mining. I recall the times we talked at our dinner table as to the ins and outs of balancing mining with the needs of the environment. I recall my father's own anxiety as to the concerns he saw as pillage of the land as he mined feldspar and bentonite. Dad discussed the cost of repairing the land and the decades it took for mother earth to attempt to heal from the mining. He always said the land could never be restored to be the same as before the minerals were mined. He shared concerns over the cost to the wild life and mother earth. Of course he had to carry out the business concerns, from the directives from headquarters in Chicago Illinois. I know, however, his knowledge of what mining actually did and does to the natural balance to the land, wild life on the plains and in the hills made him very sad. He often stated; "we as humans were so destructive." We would discuss if humans really needed the bentonite, and feldspar or was it just for use to make more money for the economy. We were curious and wondered, at what generation's expense we did this mining. Often Dad would say it is just for the almighty dollar which you can't take with you as you leave this life. Twelve years after his death I know he is right.

I now cry out in pain when I hear of the horrors in the Gulf and the mining of oil at the ocean bottom. We as humans are to care for and treasure this earth, not make vast mistakes by stealing mother earth's gifts. So I ask you to consider, why in God's name could anyone do this to the sacred land of the Black Hills. Hasn't the white man done enough to destroy the beauty of our streams and the hills?

I am writing this letter to beg you to stop all plans to mine for profit. Please do not rape Mother Earth like BP has done to our beautiful ocean. Please save this land and keep it pure and protected as a Rare and Uncommon Place in the Black Hills. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

  
Mary Ellen Arthur

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