

Gold Mining Expansion at Grape Creek - Permit #P2020002

I am opposed to approving Zephyr Minerals' application to expand gold mining at Grape Creek.

Grape Creek - Horseshoe Mountain State Stewardship Trust Parcel was designated in 1999 to be managed for "only those uses that will protect and enhance the beauty, natural values, open space and wildlife habitat of those lands."

BLM's Grape Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern ACEC which they currently manage and protect, "as a corridor of significant natural character with unique desert riparian resources, scenic and visual qualities, flora and fauna values (bighorn sheep and peregrine falcon nesting area)."

BLM's Grape Creek Wilderness Study Area was designated in 1980 and consists of over 21,400 acres between the Lower and Upper Grape Creek WSAs. The Grape Creek WSA has diverse terrain from rolling hills to rugged canyons and mountains to rich riparian zones along the creek, has cultural and historical significance, provides refuge for many local wildlife species (see below) and supports many backcountry recreational activities (also see below).

BLM's Grape Creek WSA, and adjacent USFS public lands make up the approximately 35,000 acre Grape Creek proposed Wilderness, which has been proposed for wilderness numerous times under Congresswoman DeGette's Colorado Wilderness Act, and passed the House of Representatives on February 12, 2020 as the Protect America's Wilderness Act.

The Grape Creek Watershed provides High Habitat and Range for several Wildlife Species, including Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, black bear, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, mountain lion, Brazilian free tailed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Gunnison's prairie dog, Aberts squirrel, bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl (proposed critical habitat), scaled quail, wild turkey, great blue heron, Canadian goose, and brown trout.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program identified the Grape Creek riparian corridor and watershed as the Grape Creek Potential Conservation Area for its "very high biodiversity significance" due to "excellent (A-ranked) and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) riparian natural community, narrowleaf cottonwood - Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia* - *Juniperus scopulorum*) woodland. Additionally, there is a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S2) narrowleaf cottonwood - Douglas-fir (*Populus angustifolia* - *Pseudotsuga menziesii*) woodland and a good to fair (BC-ranked) occurrence of the apparently globally secure but state imperiled (G4/S2) Rocky Mountain juniper / Red-osier dogwood (*Juniperus scopulorum* / *Cornus sericea*) woodland. Several fair (C-ranked) occurrences of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) plant, Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*), have also been documented.

Grape Creek, and the nearby Temple Canyon Park, provide local Canon City residents, and tourists, with many forms of primitive recreation including fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, bird watching, scenic viewing, photography, and bouldering.

Grape Creek recreation brings tourism and money to the local economy. It not only benefits local guides and outfitters, but produces beneficial secondary and tertiary spending at local shops, gas stations, and hotels.

Wild Connections and other conservation groups, as well as many individuals, have contacted the various agencies expressing opposition to these mining activities that could cause irreparable harm to Wilderness values, the Grape Creek water table, and excellent wildlife habitat.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lou Vincent

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STATE OF
COLORADO

Cazier - DNR, Tim <tim.cazier@state.co.us>

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1 message

Lou Vincent <lou.vincent9@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 23, 2020 at 1:04 PM

To: "tim.cazier@state.co.us" <tim.cazier@state.co.us>

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to comment on this permit application. My comments are attached.

Lou Vincent

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Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



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