

Mr. Tim Cazier
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety
tim.cazier@state.co.us

April 26, 2020

Ashlee Sack
1008 Beech Avenue
Cañon City, CO
81212

Re: Permit #P2020002

The newest trail in the South Cañon Trail system is a beautiful overlook we call "Watchtower". From its highest point, you can see the town of Cañon City, the winding path of Grape Creek, and the imposing Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the distance. The quiet is refreshing. The view is inspiring. What is missing from this scene? Industry. Noise. Pollution.

The fact that the Upper and Lower Grape Creek Wilderness Study Areas is one that was unknown to me until the wilderness characteristics that it protects were threatened. Zephyr Mining's recent application to conduct explorations in this area, however carefully constructed, threaten the backcountry wilderness characteristics that I – as a recreation user and citizen of this community – didn't even know that I prized so much.

Wilderness protects the habitat of numerous wildlife species and provides a source of clean water. It has long been used for science and education, providing sites for field trips, study areas for student research, and serving as a source of instructional examples. I can wholeheartedly agree with the statement from the BLM's website: "The appeal of wilderness for recreation is strong, and wilderness areas are seeing steadily increasing use from people who wish to experience freedom from fast-paced industrialized society." Please keep this area as pristine as possible, and let us learn from our mining mistakes of the past. Keep our drinking, agriculture, and fishing waters clean. Keep our air free from helicopters. Keep our wildlife safe from unnecessary impositions from machinery and overhead flights. Keep our local outfitters and recreation users as you make these decisions about our public lands. Thank you for your careful consideration.

I do NOT believe that allowing mining activity in this area is consistent with the objectives of a WSA. Exploration of any kind:

1. Disturbs wildlife – allowing construction of platforms and helicopter flights does not protect the wildlife, 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.
2. Inhibits backcountry experiences – Disturbing the viewshed of backcountry hikers is inappropriate in this area. Noise pollution from aircraft is also a detriment to the area's current use.
3. Threatens clean water – The applicants have indicated that they will pump water from the creek, but this also indicates that machinery will be in close proximity to the water as well.

4. Creates potential for fish disturbance – ESPECIALLY since this area is so remote, the opportunity for pollution, disturbance of the water flow, and disturbance to the geology of the area is suspect. Who will monitor their use and disturbance? If no access roads will be constructed, HOW will BLM or land managers be able to monitor their activity?

Allowing a mining operation in the Grape Creek area is detrimental to our:

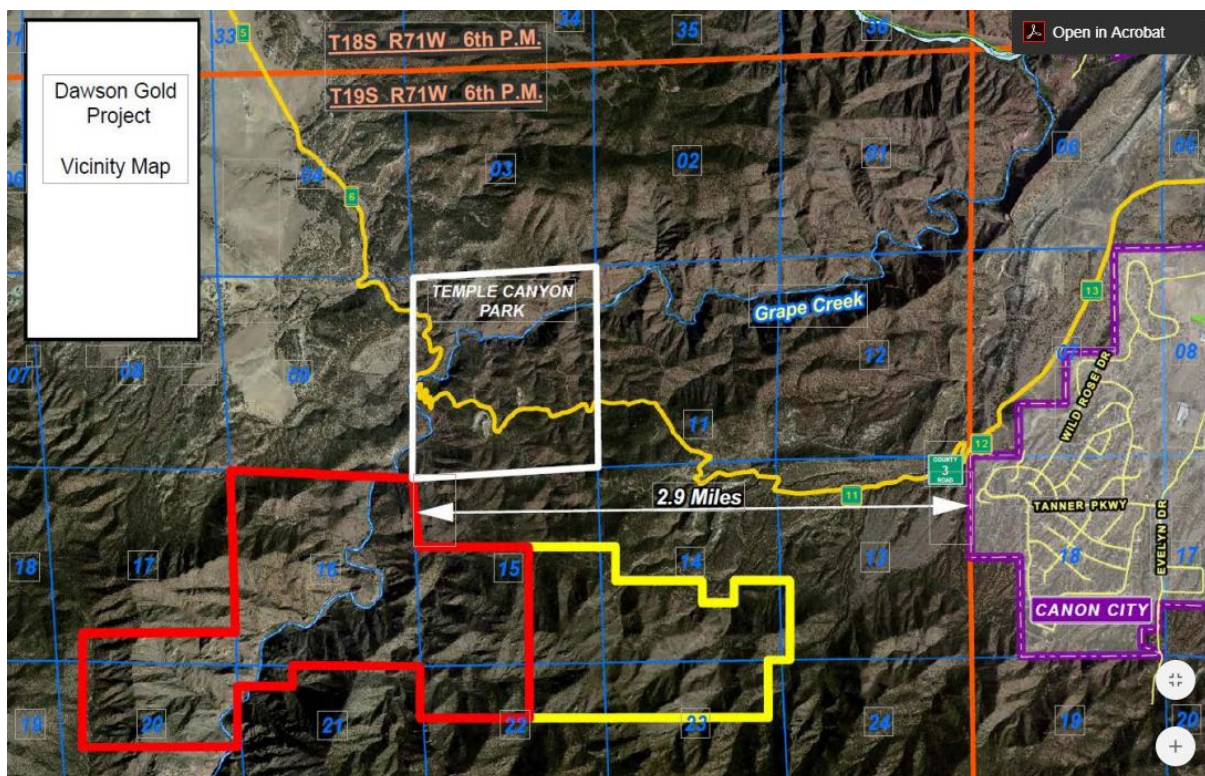
1. Backcountry recreation
2. Economy (the mining company is from Nova Scotia, whereas our local outfitters and guides are local to Cañon City and Colorado)
3. Preservation of the integrity of WSAs

This parcel is not a stand-alone piece of land. It represents a contiguous landscape that deserves protection from industry and development. While trails allow access for quiet recreation users in the Temple Canyon park, this does NOT include the introduction of helicopters, machinery, built platforms, and possible environmental disasters.

Thank you for your consideration and time. I understand that land is managed for multi-use and must consider all applications. I hope that this particular application will be rejected in favor of our beautiful natural lands and the people who so ardently appreciate it.

Best,

Ashlee Sack





STATE OF
COLORADO

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

Re: Permit #P2020002 - Comments on Mining Exploration Application

1 message

Ashlee Sack <ashleeneva@hotmail.com>
To: "tim.cazier@state.co.us" <tim.cazier@state.co.us>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 7:57 PM

Mr. Cazier,

Please find my attached comments on Re: Permit #P2020002, regarding Zephyr Mining Co.'s application to conduct mining exploration in Grape Creek.

Thank you,
Ashlee Sack



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