

January, 2012 Newsletter - 1st Quarter

Hello Defenders!

In this Issue are offered a number of ways you can help the environment, and the health of all the people. Included are a couple of petitions and letters that were sent to you before, but we are still offering them as more and more people want to sign. We are hoping you would mail them yourself directly to President Obama, or to the Secretary of Health, or Mrs. Obama. By doing that, you will save all of us time, money and paper. If you wish, you could also personally write to the addressee on the petition or letters and bring your own point of view. The squeaky wheel gets the most grease, so we are hoping by sending more and more petitions and letters, if one of them catches the attention of the powers-that-be, then maybe something can get done and you will have been a part of that.

In this Issue is also a summary of the activities that were done in the past three months. I hope you will take time to see what has happened, and think of ways you can contribute to these efforts. Oh yes, and we are still all volunteers with our general operations funded by donations. Small special project grants let us do some of our projects.

Sent by Charmaine White Face, Coordinator

Summary of Activities

Oct. 7- 9, 2011- Tabling at Black Hills Pow Wow Thanks to a grant from Indigenous Environmental Network and the Western Mining Action Network, we were able to pay for a booth at the Black Hills Pow-Wow. We also appeared in two Grand Entries with our banner No Uranium Mining in Great Sioux Nation Territory, and wore tee-shirts with our logo: HeSapa kin Wakan, Oheniya kik suyapo (Always remember the Black Hills are sacred) with The Black Hills are not for sale on the back. Another tee-shirt we wore says Nuke-free North America. Thank you to those Defenders who helped at the table in gathering signatures, selling raffle tickets, and handing out information.

Keystone XL Pipeline A special thank you goes to Sandra Little Woodard for taking letters around in the audience and asking people to sign them. On Sunday, we sent more than 100 individual letters to President Obama opposing the Keystone XL Pipeline.

[A copy is enclosed for your use](#)

. Better yet, make copies before you sign, and ask your relatives and friends to sign, then send them in individually. It might take a few stamps and envelopes, but the benefits to the people and the environment are priceless. Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the most grease. Let's keep that squeaky wheel turning.

Abandoned Uranium Mines Petition Although, initially we were only going to have this petition until the first of October, we did ask people to sign them at the Pow Wow. As we are still the only environmental group doing this, and as more and more new people are joining our group, the petition is still ongoing.

[Included with this newsletter is a petition to Michelle Obama](#) asking her to use her influence to help with the cleanup of the more than 2,000 abandoned uranium mines in this Region. Some of these mines are emitting radiation that is four (4) times as potent as that coming out of the nuclear power plant at Fukushima, Japan. It is ridiculous that this should be going on right in the middle of North America and the US Government won't do a thing to clean these up. What about the health impacts to all the people living in this Region? What about all the radioactive particles that are carried in the wind to the rest of the United States?

What you can do to help with the cleanup of the Abandoned Uranium Mines:

1. Please make copies of the petition, get them signed, then send them directly to Michelle Obama. Again, the squeaky wheel Or if you wish, write your own letter, or do both.

2. If you know any journalist from a big newspaper in a larger city, ask them to do an article, because this is affecting everyone in the United States. It is national news! Big articles have been printed in Germany but not in the United States. Why would the government want to help Japan but let their own citizens suffer the consequences of radioactive pollution? It is an outrage!

3. If you want more information about these abandoned mines, we can send you the information, or Charmaine can come and give a presentation with maps, etc., to your group or community. Write to Defenders of the Black Hills, PO Box 2003, Rapid City, SD 57709 with your request.

Black Hills Save the Black Elk Wilderness The United States Forest Service is currently logging in the Norbeck Wild Life Area and will soon be logging in the Black Elk Wilderness Area. These are the sacred lands surrounding Harney Peak. (We had a picture in our last newsletter.) The US Forest Service sells the pine beetle infested logs. They knew about the pine beetles decades ago but did nothing. Included in this is another letter to President Obama asking him to issue an Executive Order transferring this area to the National Park Service with co-management with the Great Sioux Nation. This is an action under American law, not International law, trying to use American law to protect this sacred place.

Annual Raffle

Thanks to the donations from many generous people, we were able to conduct our annual raffle. The income generated goes for the general operating expenses of the organization.

The generous donors this year were: Inter Tribal Buffalo Council, Genevieve Blue Bird, William Swift Hawk, Brenda Parsons, Sonya Holy Eagle and Dakota Drum Company, Sylvia Lambert, Victor Fischer, Lilia Firefly Cajilog,

The winner of the \$100 buffalo meat was Ruth Shoulder Blade from Montana. Other winners included: Karen Ellison, Bruce Ellison, Lola Blame, Pamela Giago, Manfred Werner, Pauline Cloudman, Sharon LeCompte, Alberta Arpan, Doris Thibeault, John Diciacco, Billie Hamblin, Kim Kearfott, and Adele White.

Some of the winners, who purchased numerous tickets, won more than one prize, as there were 20 prizes in all. The drawing was held on the last day of the Lakota Nation Invitational. Thank you so much to both the donors and those who bought tickets.

EPA Hearing in Bismarck on Clean Air in North Dakota Two Board members, Brenda Parsons and Charmaine White Face, attended an EPA Hearing on Clean Air in Bismarck, ND, on Oct. 14. As the EPA was not following a mandate to check on compliance by states of the Clean Air Act, a group from Denver sued and won. The EPA was then court ordered to conduct hearings in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota. (The lead plaintiff was former Defenders Board member, Jeremy Nichols. Yea, Jeremy!! Still caring about the environment, and doing something about it. We are so proud!)

As we did not hear about the SD Hearing, but were alerted to the North Dakota Hearing by friends in North Dakota, we attended that hearing. The dirty air from coal strip mining and coal-fired power plants is carried into South Dakota, Minnesota, and east and south by the winds. Charmaine gave testimony while Brenda manned a video camera for another environmental group. Charmaine reminded the EPA that the coal in this Region also contains naturally occurring uranium which is NOT monitored or regulated by the United States. The smoke and coal dust travels into surrounding states carrying radioactive pollution as well as the pollution from the coal. This information with accompanying health rates was sent in writing to the EPA within their deadline.

However, as we know, one letter will not necessarily cause a change. So, we started sending letters to the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, and sent off another hundred of individual letters that were signed at LNI. [The letter to the HHS Secretary is enclosed for your use](#). A recommendation was made to also include copies to the EPA Director, and possibly members of the House and/or Senate. Again, we ask that you encourage others to sign and send this letter.

Report on Otter Creek Strip Mining Project On Dec. 7, Charmaine White Face, Pamela Blue Horse, and Sandra Little met with Steve Brady, Chairman of the Northern Cheyenne Cultural Commission, regarding plans to strip-mine coal in the Otter Creek valley which is within the area that Defenders watches. A tour was made of the project site which lies within a horseshoe of federal land, the Custer National Forest. There are cultural sites and a book was written about Wooden Leg, the Northern Cheyenne chief whose families lived in this valley. However, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is not opposing the project. Arch Coal Company is leading the project. We will try to keep you updated on this project.

What you can do: The letter to HHS Secretary Sebelius will also help with this situation. The pollution from coal strip mining and coal fired power plants in Montana and Wyoming also come into South Dakota and points east and south. If the federal government will begin regulating

radioactive particles in coal then maybe we can get some relief from this deadly pollution.

Tabling at LNI, Dec. 14-17, 2012 Again, thanks to the grant from WMAN-IEN we were able to pay for the fee to table at LNI. We had our petitions and letters as well as raffle tickets. Thank you to all who helped at the booth, and to all who signed the letters and petitions.

Sat. Dec. 17, 2011, Meeting

We have arrived. A reporter attended part of the meeting and it was reported in the Rapid City Journal on Dec. 18, 2011. Much discussion occurred during the meeting which was attended by mostly elders, and a delicious potluck lunch was served. Thank you to everyone who attended. It was a great meeting with many recommendations.

Brian Brademeyer gave an update on stopping the logging in the Norbeck Wilderness area and their lawsuit. A copy of his editorial in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader is enclosed. Gary Heckenliable also gave an update on the expansion of Wharf Gold Mine in the Black Hills, and a new gold mine is planned for the rim of Spearfish Canyon. Charmaine talked about the uranium issue, a report on the EPA Hearing in Bismarck, and the reasons for the letters to the HHS Secretary Sebelius, and the petitions. These are noted in this newsletter.

A new issue was brought up: the Rochford Road Project. We talked about this years ago when Pennington County received federal funds to pave a gravel road in the middle of the Black Hills which will impact Pesla (aka Reynold's Prairie), a large sacred site. The area is ripe for housing development, and a paved road for motorcyclists, and covers 18 miles of gravel road between Deerfield Lake and Rochford. At that time we attended hearings and gave our input.

Recently, Pennington County was informed that their federal funds were in limbo in Congress. The County Commission still plans on paying \$600,000 for the Environmental Impact Statement even though they might have to pay back the funds. As soon as information is available on the EIS, we will let you know so you can send in your comments. If you have computer access, go to Pennington County SD Road Projects for updates.

Next Defenders Meeting

Defenders next meeting will be March 24, 2012, starting at 1:00 PM. Potluck lunch will be served in the Coffee Room at St. Isaac Jogues Church, 221 Knollwood Drive, Rapid City, SD.

Special Gratitude to Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz

Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz has graciously donated any royalties from the reprint of her 1977 book, The Great Sioux Nation, which was taken from the Lincoln, Nebraska, Treaty Hearing in 1974. It is going to be republished by the University of Nebraska Press in their Bison Books series. The royalties will go to both the Defenders of the Black Hills and the Sioux Nation Treaty Council to continue their work. We, members of the Board, were completely surprised and very pleased with Ms. Ortiz generous offer. The amount of royalties will depend on the amount of sales of the book this coming year.

Ms. Ortiz and Charmaine White Face, in her capacity as the Spokesperson for the Sioux Nation Treaty Council, met at the United Nations a number of years ago. They worked together on a statement for presentation at the UN Human Rights Commission in 2006. Ms. Ortiz is very informed of the Treaty issue pursued by the Sioux Nation Treaty Council, and very supportive of the work of the Treaty Council and Defenders.

Special Award from South Dakota Peace and Justice On the evening of Oct. 7, 2011, Charmaine gave a keynote presentation at the South Dakota Peace and Justice Annual Conference. Her presentation can be seen on the computer at KOLC-TV, the TV station for Oglala Lakota College. At the conclusion, SD Peace and Justice gave an award, a satellite picture of the Black Hills, to Defenders of the Black Hills for the work in protecting the environment in this Region. Congratulations, Defenders! We must keep up the good work!

Attachments:

[High Court offers last chance to save wildlife](#)
[Letter to the Health and Human Services Secretary](#)

[Petition to the First Lady Michelle Obama](#)

[Letter to President Obama - Protection of Sacred Places](#)

[Letter to President Obama - Keystone XL pipeline](#)