

We just completed our Tenth Annual Prayer Gathering for the Black Hills. It was an emotional event especially for JoAnne Tall-Flynn, Betty Janis, and Charmaine White Face as it was held close to the place where the First Black Hills Prayer Gathering was held in 2002. These three grandmothers, all with rheumatoid arthritis, laughed at the way they helped each other, those many years ago, to walk up and down over some small gullies and mounds to reach the sacred place where they prayed. They were the only three, along with reporter, Jim Kent, and Fawn, Betty's daughter, who were at that first gathering to pray for the good health of the Black Hills.

This year, Charmaine completed the Prayer Walk, uphill no less, with nearly thirty other people. At the top, JoAnne and Betty waited with some others. The day was beautiful with the smell of the pine trees taken in with every breath as the walkers made their way up Flag Mountain overlooking Pe Sla (Reynold's Prairie). Many walkers completed the more than mile-long Prayer Walk. No one thought it was only three-fourths of a mile, especially the last half mile. Our huffing and puffing was also filmed by Tony Brave from Oglala Lakota College's TV station, KOLC. If you want to see our latest Black Hills Prayer Gathering, it will be on the Internet very soon, or on the local station for those living on or near the Pine Ridge Reservation. As we invite all people to pray with us, the small ceremony is open to the public.

Some of the people got lost during the car caravan through Rapid City, and then through the myriad of roads after leaving Hill City. Hopefully, they found the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council who was also meeting someplace near PeSla. If anyone wishes to go again, please let us know and we will plan another time.

Each year, for the past ten years, a Prayer Gathering for the Black Hills, has been held, sometimes near a place in danger of more destruction or desecration. All of the Black Hills are sacred. This years event was planned at the last meeting in July. Plans to blacktop the road through Pe Sla was our concern. Since then, most of the land through which the road is located, has been hitting the news with much controversy. Now, it seems as if the Sioux Tribes, led by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, will be able to buy this sacred place. What that means for the road project is yet to be seen. We hope this sacred place will become more protected similar to the

land and area of Rosebud Lodge at Bear Butte.

1. Nominations to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation This is where nominations to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are so important. There are many federal projects that have no tribal objections regarding cultural sites. We need to start encouraging the Tribal governments to use their influence to preserve and protect cultural sites on road, mining, logging, and housing projects. We also need to keep ourselves informed.

According to information recently received by the Coordinator, there is now the opportunity to begin considering cultural landscapes as historical properties. This would include all the Black Hills, and possibly the Cave Hills area, any massacre sites and burial places. **We need a Committee that is focused on this project, preserving places based on the National Historic Preservation Act. Anyone wishing to work on this project, please call the Coordinator at xxx-399-1868, or email**

bhdefenders@msn.com

Thank you.

2. National Guard and the National Grasslands. In the last newsletter we told of the plans by the South Dakota National Guard to do their war training in the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands across from the northwestern border of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Our grave concerns were about the disturbance of naturally occurring uranium in the proposed project area and the health dangers to the soldiers and the people on the Reservation. In that area, naturally occurring uranium and its 13 decay products, all highly radioactive, lie on the surface of the land, or not far below.

The soldiers will be sleeping on that radiation, as well as constantly working in it, breathing it, and ingesting it as minute particles of dust in their food and water. They will be exposed to high levels of radiation during the war training. The dust will then be carried by the wind, first across Red Shirt village, then the entire Pine Ridge Reservation before continuing on to point south and east. Southerly winds will carry this radioactive dust back onto Rapid City and all the area in between. It is a very dangerous undertaking.

However, the Nebraska National Forest in charge of the Grasslands, has given their approval for this hazardous activity which endangers the health of thousands of people. The activities are scheduled to begin on June 1, 2013!

In our last newsletter, we stated the need for a large public meeting so these issues could be discussed and more people made aware of the dangers. Michelle May, the Librarian at Oglala Lakota College, took up the request. Charmaine was interviewed on the Woglakapi show which can be seen on KOLC TV, http://www.olec.edu/local_links/kolc/Woglakapi.html She also gave presentations for the Community, and the Oglala Sioux Tribes Land Committee. Defenders were instructed to work with the OST Natural Resources program.

More public meetings need to be planned across South Dakota, and even in Nebraska, as the dust will be going there as well. South Dakotans need to be made aware that their soldiers will be living in highly radioactive surroundings. This will not only hurt them but their families and future plans for children as well. Radioactivity causes cancer, tumors, and changes DNA, so future offspring will often be born with gross abnormalities.

Anyone who receives this newsletter in South Dakota or Nebraska, and who can help set up informational meetings on this topic, please call Charmaine at xxx-399-1868. Or, if your organization sends out newsletters, please include this information. Thank you.

3. Gold Mining in Spearfish Canyon The Lawrence County Commission Meeting on the Deadwood Standard Gold Mine was held at the Deadwood City Hall on Monday, July 23rd. Thanks to many people who gave comments on their concerns for this planned gold mine on the rim of beautiful Spearfish Canyon. The County Commissioners have delayed the project for nearly 14 months. They want more information that is required by SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources before making a decision.

4. Uranium Update

A. America's Secret Chernobyl YEAA! Mo Hollis from the Seventh Generation Fund was here a few weeks ago, and he and Charmaine worked intensely on a small video about America's Secret Chernobyl. We have wanted a video about the radioactive pollution in our Region for many years. Although we have worked with many videographers and film companies, nothing has been released to date. As Mo does such excellent work, we are more than honored to have him complete this video, which he is doing pro bono, out of the goodness of himself.

Mo did the original Defenders short video (12 minutes) which can be seen on the website: www.defendblackhills.org Copies of that video will be available at the booth at the Black Hills Pow Wow, or by request in writing, on the phone, or via internet.

B. Uranium Bill Thanks to our Treasurer, Brian Brademeyer, we now have a draft Bill. We will be sending this to other groups and organizations for refinement as it will need more work. Again, anyone wishing a copy, please contact the Coordinator. If you want to help get this bill passed, there are a number of things that can be done:

Contact federal Senators or Representatives and ask if they would support a bill to clean up the more than 3,000 abandoned uranium mines in the Northern Great Plains. This can be done via mail, email, or by phone;

Contact Michelle Obama mentioning the same thing and if she would use her influence to save the lives of thousands of children from cancer. Last year we sent her petitions and letters with no response to date. This is a campaign year. Let's make the healthy lives of children in the Northern Great Plains be a campaign issue.

Contact Senator Tom Harkin, (D-Iowa) as he is responsible for the health of the public. The radioactive pollution caused by these abandoned uranium mines, some emitting four times as much as the Fukushima Nuclear Reactor should bring alarm to any thinking person.

Ask all of the above people to go to our website: www.defendblackhills.org to learn more about this National disaster.

5. Other Presentations Oglala Lakota College Library at the Piya Wiconi campus is hosting the Coordinator in Community Presentations at 2:00 PM on the third Friday of the month. On Oct. 19th, Charmaine will give a presentation on Threats to Sacred Sites, and on Nov. 16th, she will talk about Water. She has already spoken about the National Guard and the National Grasslands, and the threat of coal mining and power plants in this Region. The presentations are being filmed by KOLC-TV for local airing as well as on the Internet. If you would like a presentation in your community, please call xxx-399-1868 for more information.

6. Black Hills Pow Wow We will have a booth at the Pow Wow, Oct. 5, 6, & 7, 2012. If you can help, please, call the Coordinator to schedule a time. We will have letters to sign and information to pass out. The raffle items will be on display, and the Pow Wow is a beautiful event to enjoy. We always have fun, especially when we dance with our banner in the Grand Entries. Although our banner is getting old, we still are very proud when we display it.

7. Annual Fall Raffle:

Our Annual Fall Raffle has begun thanks to the generosity of so many donors Tickets will be sold at the Black Hills Pow Wow which begins Oct 5th. Our Raffle will end at the Lakota Nation Invitational Basketball Tournament in December.

A star quilt with a turtle for Turtle Island has been donated by Sandra Little. Last year our biggest draw was the \$100 of buffalo meat. We have contacted Inter Tribal Buffalo Council again to see if they will donate that amount. Other similar donations are being sought. Laverne and Connie Fast Horse have donated a number of art pieces by Doug Fast Horse and Darrell No Neck, and Ike Werner donated a gorgeous, framed painting by Thurman Horse. Billy Swift Hawk, although recovering from a health issue, has promised another painted buffalo skull. Any one of these pieces is well worth more than \$100, yet our raffle tickets are still only \$1 a piece, or 6 for \$5.00.

If you want to help Defenders organization by selling tickets, or if you just wish to purchase tickets for a chance at any of the above prizes, please call xxx-399-1868, or email bhdefenders@msn.com, or write to PO Box 2003, Rapid City, SD.

This is the only time of year we do this kind of fund raising. The proceeds go to help with the mailing, for stamps, or paper and envelopes, or copy expenses. Occasionally, the proceeds will be used for travel purposes to give presentations or for meeting expenses. Your generosity helps us continue with this important and unique work. We still bring forward issues that are not necessarily in the public eye.

Next Meeting: Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012, during the Black Hills Pow Wow, 1 - 5:00 P.M. in the

coffee room of St. Isaac Jogues Church, 221, Knollwood Dr., Rapid City, SD. Potluck lunch to follow the meeting. Hope to see you then.

#####