

GRAND CANYON TRUST
Uranium mining ban education trip to Washington, DC
April 4-7, 2011



Havasupai tribal representative Coleen Kaska (r) briefs Assistant Secretary Will Shafroth and DOI officials.



Former Senator Byron Dorgan, now Senior Fellow with the Bipartisan Policy Center, is briefed by Havasupai Vice Chairman Edmond Tilousi and Coleen Kaska.



Kaibab-Paiute representative Roland Maldonado and Hualapai Cultural Preservation Director Loretta Jackson-Kelly discuss uranium withdrawal with Judy Pasternak, author of *Yellow Dirt* and current editor with Bloomberg News.



Group meets with Congressman Raul Grijalva (AZ), sponsor of the Grand Canyon Watershed Protection Act. Front (left to right) Coleen Kaska, Havasupai; Hertha Woody, GCT Program Associate; Congressman Grijalva; Back: Roger Clark, GCT Program Director; Loretta Jackson-Kelly, Hualapai Cultural Preservation Director; Edmond Tilousi, Havasupai Vice Chairman.

GRAND CANYON: American Indians urge Interior, Congress to block new hardrock claims (04/06/2011)
Manuel Quinones, E&E reporter

American Indian leaders are lobbying in Washington, D.C., this week for a ban on new hardrock mining claims near the Grand Canyon for fear that mining projects will pollute waterways and ruin tourism.

"The elders are the ones who are pushing for this; they are the ones that we uphold their teachings," said Edmond Tilousi, vice chairman of the Havasupai Tribe, whose reservation is just south of Grand Canyon National Park. "It's very important that we convey that message to the leaders here in Washington."

In late 2009, the Interior Department imposed a two-year hold on new mining claims near the canyon while officials studied the environmental effects of hardrock exploration there. The temporary ban followed efforts from Toronto-based Denison Mines Corp. to extract uranium in the area. Now, Interior is taking public comment on longer-term protections, and American Indian leaders want to press federal officials to go as far as they can in stopping new claims.

"We are the ones who are affected as far as the poisoning, the cancer, the blood diseases, disorders," said Roland Maldonado, an appointed representative of the Kaibab-Paiute Tribe. "We feel that humans are not acceptable losses, and this is just a money thing."

A draft environmental impact statement released by Interior in February includes several levels of protection, from doing nothing and allowing new mining claims to setting aside 1 million acres for 20 years (E&ENews PM, Feb. 17).

If officials decide not to act, advocates fear 20 miles of new roads, traffic disruptions, noise and about 30 new uranium mines popping up.

Loretta Jackson-Kelly, cultural resources director for the Hualapai Tribe, fears increased uranium mining "will eventually leak contaminants into the system of the Colorado River. We are here to protect the river and keep the health of the river." The Grand Canyon and the Colorado River border the Hualapai Reservation.

Mining claims almost surround Kaibab National Forest, Grand Canyon National Park and some reservations. American Indians say they rely on Colorado River tourism businesses. Plus, they say, they use the land for raising cattle, hunting and raising native plants.

"We are the native people of this region," Havasupai tribal member Coleen Kaska said. "Not only us, we need to think about other people downstream, too."

Mining industry leaders say the United States should be promoting, not curtailing, new uranium mining. They say opponents are jeopardizing American energy and mineral independence, adding that the United

States imports most of the uranium it uses in energy production, with Russia being a major supplier.

In issuing permits for three uranium mining projects in the area recently, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality dismissed environmental concerns in a document responding to questions from the public, including leaders from area tribes (Greenwire, March 11).

"Arizona state statutes and laws require the department to issue permits if the applicant is able to demonstrate that they will comply with all applicable environmental regulations," the DEQ said.

But for environmentalists and tribal leaders, such reassurances provide little comfort.

"We have been taught to protect our aboriginal land," Kaska said.

"There is an energy that runs through everything," Kaska said. "Not only the animals, but the land, vegetation and also the people," added Maldonado, whose reservation is just north of numerous mining claims and some existing mines.

The American Indian leaders met with Interior Department officials and lawmakers' staffs, including a senior adviser to Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), who has introduced legislation to permanently block new mining projects on more than 1 million acres around the Grand Canyon. They say their lobbying effort is about more than just protecting current generations.

"We are looking beyond seven generations, way beyond that, to protect our environment for them," Jackson-Kelly said.

<http://www.eenews.net/Greenwire/2011/04/06/10>