

The Pueblo Chieftain

Conservation group concerned about mining exploration near wilderness area

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Pueblo West, Fremont, Custer counties

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CANON CITY — Wild Connections members are voicing concern about Zephyr Minerals' proposal to conduct exploration near the Grape Creek proposed wilderness here.

“The Grape Creek state trust land block is completely within the Grape Creek proposed wilderness, which is a part of Congresswoman Diana DeGette’s 2018 Colorado Wilderness Proposal”, said Wild Connections Conservation Director John Sztukowski.

In DeGette’s wilderness proposal, Grape Creek is described as the creek responsible for nearly all the snowmelt that comes through the Wet Mountain Valley to the Arkansas River.

“Grape Creek above all is a destination for fisherman. It has few points of access, and can be successfully fished throughout numerous seasons due to the low elevation of the valley,” the proposal reads.

“We will be submitting public comments on the lease proposal which is concerning for a number of reasons. Not only is it an excellent recreational site for fishing, hunting, and hiking, it provides great habitat for a lot of the area wildlife, including iconic species such as the bald eagle and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep,” Sztukowski said.

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