

OPINION

Letters to the editor

Royal Gorge Preservation Project welcomes input, donations to organization

The Royal Gorge Preservation Project is a local non-profit corporation that exists to protect community growth by opposing human activity that would prove to be destructive to our environment and to support tourism as the path forward for our city and county. Community input to achieve that goal is critical to our understanding of how we can best serve that cause.

The RGPP has recently received information that some community officials have taken a “wait-and-see” approach regarding Canadian exploratory/mining company Zephyr Minerals Ltd.’s plans to develop a hard rock mine just southwest of Cañon City. The RGPP has considered and rejected that approach. We have taken this position after considering the historical impacts of hard rock mining within Colorado and other states; the tumultuous effects on the environment, including animal habitation, as well as plant life and our watershed; the imminent danger of fire, especially when considering that Zephyr’s permitted exploratory area lines up for seven and a half miles with prevailing high winds from the west; the impact to our city and county roads; the fact that only seven to eight percent of extracted gold is used for industrial purposes; and the list goes on.

Zephyr Minerals Ltd. has been in Cañon City and Fremont County since about 2012 with a single objective; to mine the wilderness adjacent to Cañon City for commercial profit. They did not fly down from Halifax to do us any favors. One can listen to what they have to say then read the disclaimers that they write after advertising their wares.

There are several courses of action that can be taken to address Zephyr’s intentions which, most recently, including securing a permit to mine claims within the easternmost section of their permitted exploratory area, the area adjacent to Cañon City. Possibly the best action is for the citizenry to educate themselves regarding the impact of hard rock mining; make an informed decision regarding their acceptance of having an active mine in their community; then acting on that decision by calling or writing the County Commissioners and advocating that position.

The website www.zapzephyr.com is a good place to start. It addresses mining generally and gives numerous examples of fact and opinion as it affects our community. Letters to the Editor can be written. Alerting friends and neighbors to the existence, intent and environmental reality of a mine could be crucial. Supporting the RGPP with helpful ideas and donations is a great way to help.

The RGPP is coordinating with other groups within and without the state and are working to build a broader base from which to work. We have reported Conditional Use Permit non-compliance issues to state and federal agencies when Zephyr has not adhered to exploratory requirements. We are now looking for more effective ways with which to work more directly within our community. Your feedback via the RGPP website (www.royalgorgepreservationproject.org) would be helpful in that regard. You may also request to be put on the RGPP mailing list through that website.

We are walking a long and difficult road and need all the help we can get. It will be appreciated.

**The Royal Gorge Preservation Project,
Cañon City**