

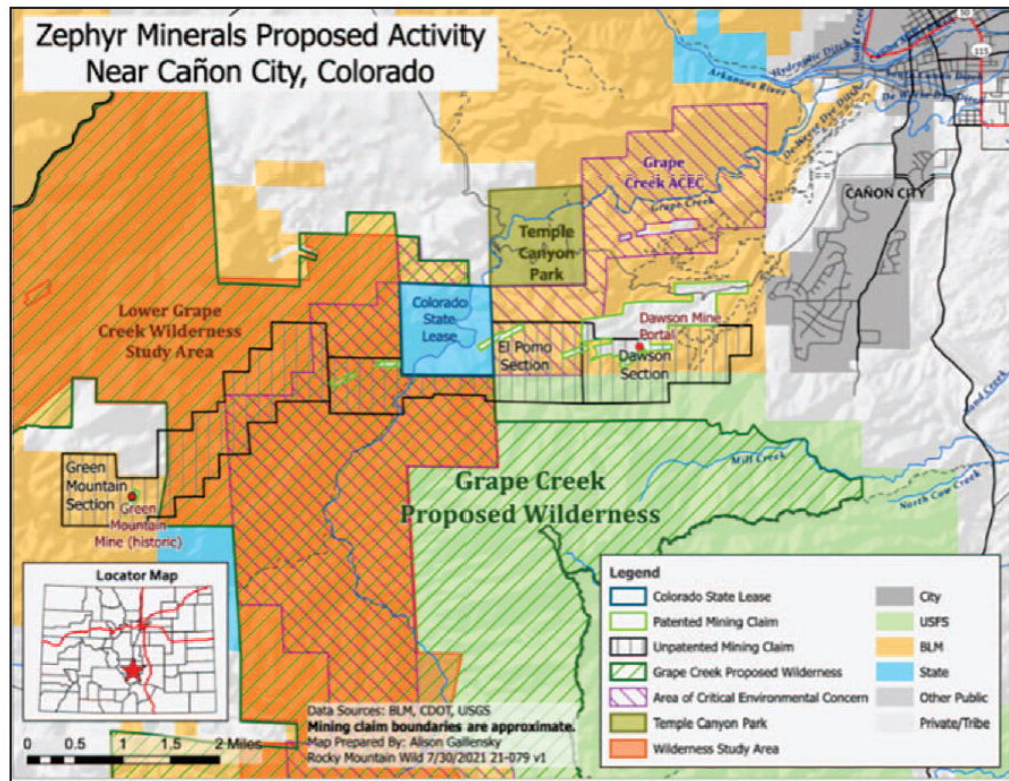
# A TIME FOR REFLECTION

Now is a time for reflection! For the past 10 years Fremont County has been enduring the direct effects of a sustained attempt to create a working gold mine (or any other hard rock mine that is potentially profitable) by Zephyr Minerals Ltd., headquartered in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Zephyr Minerals actively engaged with Fremont County in 2012. They publicly labeled Fremont County as a “mining friendly community,” which is an interesting assumption on their part. Who provided them with that idea? Was it an effective sales program coupled with the sale of shares to ‘movers and shakers’ within the community? Was the citizenry polled? As recently as 2018, the Fremont Economic Development Corporation welcomed Zephyr Minerals as an effective partner, a good corporate citizen and neighbor. How could they know that in the absence of a substantive track record?

In 2012 (October) Zephyr Minerals held shares valued at \$.20 per share (US). In January 2022, Zephyr Minerals’ stock shares were valued at \$.14 per share (US). Zephyr has claimed buried riches in our back yard that yet remain unproven. The Dawson mountainside is inherently difficult to mine given its geological structure, yet they continue to present a dream mining scenario for the near future, one which has the substance of cotton candy. Zephyr touts upwards of ninety mining jobs which would constitute a medium sized mine. Research shows that an operational medium sized mine (trucks, mining equipment, processing plant, etc.) would cost in the realm of hundreds of millions of dollars to build and operate. Zephyr Minerals possesses approximately \$883,000.00 in operating capital.

A boon for the community? How about the unstated realities: Ninety employees, jobs that few if any of which would go to locals given their lack of underground mining experience; mostly male, relatively young in a city with a serious housing shortage and with the attendant social services challenges? Let’s consider damage to vegetation; industrial lighting; 24/7 noise; dust; fire; six and a half tons of explosive going off each week; a tailings dump with potential catastrophic failure consequences; intrusion into established hiking and biking trails; and hydrology issues too extensive



for inclusion in this writing (read Dr. Steven H. Emerman’s report entitled “Potential Groundwater and Surface Water Impacts from the Proposed Dawson Gold Mine, Fremont County, Colorado, USA.” The entire report can be viewed by searching this title).

To date, their efforts have been willingly supported by our County Commissioners through their authorization of Conditional Use Permits for exploration. These permits encompass 3,574 acres, a landmass of seven and a half miles, extending from a point east of Copper Gulch Road to a point directly south-west of Canon City. This is the same land mass that is home to big horn sheep, deer, mountain lions, bear, etc., as well as being a conduit for the prevailing and often high intensity winds that commonly sweep towards Canon City. Fire danger alone should be sufficient reason for denying any further permitting. Additionally, Zephyr’s exploratory permit intrudes itself directly through the Lower Grape Creek Wilderness Study Area; the Colorado State Lease area; directly north of the Grape Creek Proposed Wilderness area; just south of Temple Canyon Park; and directly south of a Grape Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Current federal efforts to establish a Wilderness Area proximate to the

permitted area would be derailed by the presence of an active gold mine. If the approval process for a mining permit is brought to Fremont County, a vote by two of our County Commissioners could cause the destructive effects stated above.

A Canon City Daily Record article written by Commissioner Debbie Bell, published on May 2, 2018, entitled “Investing in Fremont County” contained the following commentary. Bell stated that “We [Fremont County] were not immune to the boom-and-bust cycles that naturally occur in the oil and mining industries. Unfortunately, 150 years of such activities left a legacy of land and water impacted by petroleum and other hazardous substances.” She goes on to extoll receipt of a three-year \$600,000.00 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to assess and prioritize sites for cleanup and continued assessment. Bell further stated “Locally, potential project sites might once have hosted mining for gold, iron, gypsum, coal or uranium leaving behind abandoned mines, ore mills, gravel pits, electrical transformers and unpermitted dump sites.” One hopes that Commissioner Bell will remain true to her forward-thinking values if/when Zephyr Minerals attempts to sell its ugliness in Fremont County

by garnering the final support of our commissioners for a permitted gold mine.

Let’s put all of this into context. The issues presented herein all lead to an actionable goal by Zephyr Minerals Ltd., which is to explore for and establish a medium sized operational gold mine within the confines of Fremont County and adjacent to Canon City, estimated to have a three to five-year mine life. Please consider the long-term consequences of this short-term plan to extract local resources before returning home to Canada. Our citizens are led by local leaders, but sometimes local leaders need a push in the right direction. Let’s push together!

## ROYAL GORGE PRESERVATION PROJECT

GARY PETERSON,  
BOARD CHAIRMAN

The Royal Gorge Preservation Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation created to preserve the natural beauty of the Royal Gorge region from environmentally destructive human activity.