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**Havasupai Tribe, conservation coalition will defend Grand Canyon from uranium industry appeal**

*Uranium companies appeal ruling that banned new mining claims on 1 million acres near iconic park*

GRAND CANYON, Arizona – The Havasupai Tribe and conservation groups will fight appeals filed yesterday by two mining lobbying groups challenging a ruling by Arizona U.S. District Court Judge David G. Campbell that upheld a ban on new uranium mining claims on about one million acres adjacent to Grand Canyon.

In January 2012, then-Interior Secretary Ken Salazar issued the 20-year ban that prohibits new mining claims and limits mine development on existing claims. A mining industry lawsuit asserted that the Interior Department’s exhaustive two-year study, culminating in a 700-page evaluation of environmental impacts, was inadequate.

The ban was originally called for in 2008 by Arizona’s governor, local governments, American Indian tribes, recreationists, and conservation groups concerned about the impact of a uranium mining boom on pure groundwater, cultural resources, and the iconic landscapes surrounding Grand Canyon.

The Havasupai Tribe, Grand Canyon Trust, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity and National Parks Conservation Association, all represented by not-for-profit law firm Earthjustice, intervened in the lawsuit filed by mining and uranium-industry trade associations and uranium prospector Gregory Yount.

In October, Judge Campbell [upheld the ban](#), validating the environmental impact statement and the thoughtful approach taken by the federal agencies involved in producing the statement. Campbell wrote that the Secretary of the Interior had the authority to “err on the side of caution in protecting a national treasure — Grand Canyon national park.”

The two lobbying groups appealing the decision are the National Mining Association and the American Exploration & Mining Association.

Havasupai Chairman Rex Tilousi provided the following statement emphasizing the importance of Judge Campbell’s decision upholding the ban:

"The Havasupai support the withdrawal of the lands from mining for the protection of our homes and our water. The ruling by Judge Campbell recognizes the unique and important resources on the lands south of Grand Canyon that are our aboriginal homelands and within the watershed that feeds our springs and flows into our canyon home."

**Earthjustice attorney Ted Zukoski who is representing the groups** said: "The communities like Supai that depend on the life-giving waters of the Grand Canyon region deserve protection from the toxic pollution and industrialization threatened by large-scale uranium mining. So do the deer, elk, condors, and other wildlife found in the Canyon. That's why we will keep fighting to defend these lands from this self-serving attack by the uranium industry."

"The court's ruling affirms conclusions by five federal agencies, including scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey," said **Grand Canyon Trust's Roger Clark**. "Uranium mining poses unacceptable risks to Grand Canyon's water, wildlife, and people. It should be permanently banned from our region."

"Secretary Salazar's decision to ban new mining claims was great news for Grand Canyon National Park and the greater Grand Canyon region, as well as the many visitors, businesses and organizations, local governments and Native American tribes who care about the park and the surrounding public lands," said **Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club's Grand Canyon chapter director**. "We will contest this appeal to ensure that uranium mines are not allowed to contaminate the groundwater and threaten streams and drinking water."

"This appeal is yet another attempt by the mining industry to protect the profits of a few at the expense of the public good and welfare of local and tribal communities," said **Katherine Davis, a public lands campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity**. "We'll continue to defend this ban on uranium mining that protects this critical watershed and the wildlife and communities that depend on it."

"After an extensive review process and substantial public participation, Secretary Salazar made a strong, affirmative decision to protect one of the world's most enduring landscapes and the sustained health of indigenous communities that live within the watershed of Grand Canyon," said **Kevin Dahl of the National Parks Conservation Association**. "We'll work to defeat industry's appeal because it puts important and necessary protections at risk."

One of the great symbols of the American West, Grand Canyon was first protected as a national monument by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908, and is surrounded by millions of additional acres of public lands that include wilderness areas, two national monuments, lands designated to protect endangered species and cultural resources, and old-growth ponderosa pine forests. The canyon area is also home to the Havasupai, Kaibab Band of Paiutes, Hualapai and Navajo tribes and has been designated a "World Heritage" site. The greater Grand Canyon region attracts about five million tourists and recreationists per year.

**ONLINE VERSION: <http://earthjustice.org/news/press/2014/havasupai-tribe-conservation-coalition-will-defend-grand-canyon-from-uranium-industry-appeal>**

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