

Additional Review By M. D. Campbell and Associates, L.P.
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Black = Original Article Content

Yellow = Particular Offending words or phrases

Red = C&A Mining Group Comments

Article in Question:

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A Uranium Alliance Formed

By Brandon Bennett, *Black Hills Pioneer*

RAPID CITY - Uranium exploration is proceeding in certain areas of South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado, and four different environmental groups have formed an alliance to educate residents of the above states about the dangers of uranium exploration and mining.

[1. The implication here is that “educated” people are expected to conclude that uranium mining is inherently dangerous. The author of this article states that all the Alliance has to do is present their case and that will be sufficient to impede the progress of the mining project. The author states their intentions but they do this without providing any evidence to support their views. They are more like advertising agencies selling products than educating people by providing accurate information. The author never addresses the issues of just where the danger is in uranium exploration, perhaps because the subject was never seriously considered because of a lack of understanding of the conditions present...?

2. The author refers to the members of the Alliance as “environmental groups” but he should have called them “anti-mining activists” whose real agenda may not be altruistic by serving environmental interests after all but by promoting other self-interests. As a note here, the term “environmental groups” is generally a misnomer created by the media many years ago. National groups, such as Greenpeace, Environmental Defense Fund, etc., are actually adversarial groups who “oppose” certain projects, actions of government or industry and occasionally have legitimate claims but often play into the media’s need to create fear and controversy to maintain attention and membership and the revenues to perpetuate the companies. As with the small-town media, they also offer little or marginal evidence to convince the national and local community of certain perceived problems.]

Defenders of the Black Hills and ACTION for the Environment of South Dakota, Wyoming's Powder River Basin Resource Council and Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction met in Rapid City for a news conference Nov. 10 to draw attention to what is happening in these three states.

[The question arising here is: Where was the news conference held? Who organized it? How many people attended? Was regulatory or industry representation invited? If not, why not? After a little research, we found that the Press Conference was held in the meeting room at the Dunn Brothers Coffee House, 719 Omaha in Rapid City, S.D. Speakers included Liliias Jones Jarding, Ph. D. from *Coloradans Against Resource Destruction*, Fort Collins, Co; Shannon Anderson, *Powder River Basin Resource Council*, Sheridan, WY; Gary Heckenliable, *ACTion for the Environment*, Rapid City; and Charmaine White Face, Coordinator, *Defenders of the Black Hills*, also in Rapid City. So this amounts to four people meeting in the back room of a coffee house with one or more members of the local press to trumpet their agenda to the local communities. There is no mention of any other participants. Who paid for the travel and lodging of the out-town folks? Funds from others groups with opposing agenda?]

"In all three of these states, the common denominator in all this is Powertech Uranium, a Canadian company," said Charmaine White Face of Defenders of the Black Hills. Powertech has permits for exploration in South Dakota and Wyoming and has proposed mining near Ft. Collins, Colo.

[So here we have the actual purpose of the news conference. This conference is not about educating the public about the dangers of uranium mining at all. This is a concerted attempt to publically criticize a particular company. Why this particular company? There are a number of other uranium operators in the three-state area but the Alliance makes no mention of them. Their goal is less about public protection or education than it is about blocking Powertech's activities. And why bring up the fact that this is a Canadian company? Would the mining of uranium be less dangerous if the operator was American? Would it be less dangerous if the company was composed of a consortium of Native Americans? The author reaches for not-so-subtle prejudices to influence the local communities.]

One of the biggest problems for the group, alliance members explained (in the coffee house with the reporter), is the disturbance of soils that contain uranium, which they say then seeps into the water table and affects landowners near uranium deposits.

[1. The "members" apparently failed to mention that these incidences occurred in the 1950's to 1970's when surface mining was commonly practiced prior to the development of today's rigid environmental regulations. Today's regulations require preventative measures to be in place to prevent injection fluids from migrating out of the approved production area. If a company could not demonstrate conclusively that they would control the surface and ground water in the production area, they would not be allowed to operate the mine.

2. Also, they appear to be discussing open-pit and underground mining techniques. Powertech is proposing in-situ recovery (ISR) mining, which is a very different technique that does not disturb surface soils or result in mine tailings like the other surface mining techniques practiced in the 1960s and early 1970s. Even if some

surface mining is anticipated by Powertech, recent state regulations have been well developed to protect human health and the environment, including the local ground water used by those in the general area of mining.]

"Here in Wyoming, there's uranium that's leached 500 feet, and it's running down that far, and as everyone else has said, you're disturbing the natural environment and where it's stood in place, it's relatively safe, but when you disturb the area, it will have consequences," said Powder River Basin Resource Council's Shannon Anderson.

[The above statement portrays a confused understanding of the basic processes involved in in situ recovery (ISR) of uranium and in uranium mining in general. It is evident that no one of the Alliance has taken the time to explain clearly to the reporter what is going on in ISR mining, assuming the Alliance people know. The public needs to be informed on the basics of in situ uranium mining and the permitting process before they can begin to speak about the potential dangers. Shannon's comment is an unsupported assertion that is designed to induce fear and an emotional response from the reader. She attempts, and fails, to discuss geological information coherently. What consequences are being referred to here? In the case of ISR mining, the disturbance that is being discussed is the removal of a contaminant (uranium) that has been present in the aquifer and associated ground water for millions of years.]

The four groups issued this statement Saturday.

"We want the uranium industry to know that we stand together on this issue. Whether in a rural setting or a populated area, uranium mining causes radioactive contamination.

[1. The Alliance folks appear to be confused about what type of mining is going on here. Or perhaps they are not confused at all and are using the past practices of surface and underground mining and its concomitant problems to purposely mislead the public regarding the type and degree of contamination expected from a completely different type of mining uranium. ISR mining does not cause radioactive contamination; it removes it from underground and from the associated aquifers.

2. Has there been any exposures causing human-health issues, aside from those of the underground uranium miners of the 1950s through the 1970s, who also smoked tobacco products? For a review of the health issues, see one of our recent reviews on similar issues: <http://mdcampbell.com/CARreviewszz/ColoradoCombination111107.pdf>]

Past uranium sites continue to contaminate the air, land and water. Any bonds designed to pay for the cleanup of former mining areas have not been sufficient and taxpayers have been forced to pay the bill. We call on the public and all elected officials to do everything possible to protect the water, land and local economies from proposed uranium activities."

[It is true in a few cases that past surface uranium mining sites (of the 1950 through the 1970s) continue to contaminate air, land, and water, but it is also true that a number of responsible companies took the proper measures to assure that that won't happen. In some cases, where companies have gone bankrupt many decades ago, state and federal taxpayer dollars have been used to pay for the cleanup. However, there are no reported incidences to date where public funds have been used to clean up an ISR project. In addition, today's regulations require larger bonds for future cleanups, if even necessary.]

White Face commented the group was planning to meet again that afternoon to formulate a plan to deal with this issue on the legislative level. Dr. Liliias Jones Jarding says things are a little different in Colorado. "In Colorado, all our elected officials for the most part, are against this proposed mining. Our member of Congress, one of our senators, our state representatives, city officials and some county officials are coming on board, and people are against it," she said.

[1. Ms. Charmaine White Face has been an outspoken critic of the uranium industry, mainly because of the contamination that has resulted from historical surface mining in the Black Hills in the mid 1960s. See the following: <http://www.eaglerocktradingpost.com/uranium.htm>]

[2. Dr. Liliias Jones Jarding is a Political Science Ph.D., a self-appointed mouthpiece for the downtrodden who need a Ph.D. to make their case sound respectable, and a promoter of the wind-energy industry. Check out our comments in an earlier review: <http://mdcampbell.com/CARreviewszz/ColoradoCombination111107.pdf>. Notice the way Jarding exaggerates: "all our elected officials...for the most part." And "Our members of Congress, one of our senators (she didn't name), an unspecified number of state representatives, city officials, and some county officials are coming on board" (so they may not be "on board" but are thinking about it?). And finally, Jarding makes the unsubstantiated claim that "people are against it". Does she actually think the community does not see through her deceptive agenda?]

White Face added that some European countries are taking steps to wean themselves off nuclear power, which is being touted as clean energy. "While it can produce efficient energy, what do you have as a result? Radioactive steam and water and toxic waste. How can that be good?" she asked. She went on to say that the U.S. needs to do the same and reduce its need for nuclear power, even if fossil fuels are also bad. "Why can't we do more with wind? South Dakota has been tagged as the Saudi Arabia of wind. Let's get wind and solar power to the masses," she said.

[1. Which countries are these? There are 12 new nuclear power plants currently under construction in Europe and the Russian Federation. Yes, the Germans are limiting their enthusiasm for nuclear power but they appear to have other energy alternatives at present. The European Union gets 35% of its power from nuclear plants with France leading the way. With Europe taking a more active role in reducing greenhouse emissions, it is hard to believe that they would "wean" themselves off nuclear power. From an emissions standpoint, nuclear power is far cleaner than using oil or coal, as these anti-mining activists have stated above.

2. The author awkwardly cites “radioactive steam and water and toxic waste” without comment or context, in an attempt to produce fear and anxiety in the reader. The waste handling issues are not unsolvable. Total produced to date only would occupy a football field to a depth of 10 feet.

3. Once again the group’s agenda emerges in the form of favoring wind energy. Whether nuclear power is important is not the issue. Even whether wind energy is important is not the issue here, although both have roles to play in the U.S. energy program. Oddly enough, their agenda has nothing to do with the issues at hand, i.e., uranium exploration and production. It does have to do with being against nuclear power.]

The conference concluded with the participants saying they will proceed with legal means against Powertech Uranium in the courts, and will see where these actions take them.

[This is the traditional method to prevent mining. The courts traditionally uphold mining rights as long as it’s performed in a responsible manner. Most anti-mining activists don’t have sufficient funding to pursue such marginal issues but operate under the naive assumption that threatened lawsuits will add so much cost to the project that mining companies will just give up and go away. Generally, the activists represent only a small percentage of the local community who look upon such interference as interrupting economic development of the local economy and as inhibiting the production of yellow cake to fuel U.S. energy needs. This will also decrease our dependence on Middle East oil & gas production and begin to reduce emissions of CO₂ and other gases to the environment along with a mix of other clean sources of energy (such as solar and wind energy) to supply remote areas of the U.S. and overseas.]

The author, Brandon Bennett, is a reporter for the *Black Hills Pioneer* in Rapid City, South Dakota.

[Compare the difference in tenor between this anti-uranium article and a recent article by Mr. Bennett on wind energy (see below). When not reflecting the extreme minority view against uranium exploration and mining, Mr. Brandon only a few weeks earlier reported on another meeting where state regulatory and mining people presented educational information on what *Powertech Uranium* was planning to do. This clearly highlights the role the media plays, both small-town newspapers as well as TV Network media, in creating controversy by misrepresenting the impact of the views of the few in expense of those of the many in this country today. Compare the articles linked below.]

The Anti-Uranium Article:

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?BRD=1300&dept_id=156925&newsid=19015356&PAG=461&rfi=9

The Wind Energy Article:

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?BRD=1300&dept_id=156925&newsid=18998634&PAG=461&rfi=9

The Pro-Uranium Article:

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=18961222&BRD=1300&PAG=461&dept_id=156925&rft=8

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