



## MINING:

### Groups sue Forest Service over mine reopening

Manuel Quinones, E&E reporter  
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The Havasupai Tribe joined three conservation groups yesterday in suing the Forest Service for allowing the reopening of a uranium mine near Grand Canyon National Park.

The groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity and the Grand Canyon Trust, say the agency relied on outdated information when it allowed Energy Fuels Inc. to reopen its Canyon mine last year.

“The Forest Service should be protecting the Grand Canyon instead of shielding the uranium industry’s dangerous plans from public, tribal, environmental and scientific scrutiny,” said Taylor McKinnon, a campaign director with the Center for Biological Diversity.

The lawsuit faults the government agency for failing to update environmental reviews from 1986. The groups say new circumstances have come to light, including the reintroduction of the California condor and the designation of the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property.

“We regret that the Forest Service is not protecting our sacred site in the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property from destruction by uranium mining,” Havasupai tribal Chairman Don Watahomigie said in a statement.

“The Havasupai are returning to the federal courts to protect our people, our religion and our water.”

The mine also falls within the 1 million acres that the Interior Department withdrew last year from new mining claims. However, operating mines and existing claims that prove to have an economically recoverable resource are not included in that withdrawal.

Earlier this year, in a similar case, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Bureau of Land Management did not break the law when it allowed Denison Mines Corp. to reopen its Arizona 1 mine in Mohave County. Energy Fuels now owns Denison’s U.S. operations.

Groups are weighing their options in that case, said McKinnon, including asking for a rehearing or pursuing the case with the U.S. Supreme Court.