



Tribe And Environmentalists Sue Forest Service Over Uranium Mine

By Laurel Morales / Friday, March 8, 2013

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — The Havasupai Tribe and environmental groups filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service for allowing a uranium mining company to operate six miles outside of Grand Canyon National Park.

Havasupai Chairman Don Watahomigie says the mine is on a sacred site and designated traditional cultural property. He's also concerned about protecting the tribe's drinking water.

"They say it's foolproof," Watahomigie said. "There won't be no accidents but we're sure there will be. If leaks should occur, leaks into the water aquifers. The water goes down into Supai and into our canyon."

Environmentalists say the Forest Service needs to update a 1986 environmental review.

The mine falls within the 1-million-acre ban on mining approved by the Obama Administration over a year ago. The Forest Service determined the Canyon Mine had "valid existing rights" predating the ban, which would allow the mine to operate.

A spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service says he cannot comment on pending litigation.