

Save South Park Digest



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Who is Save South Park?

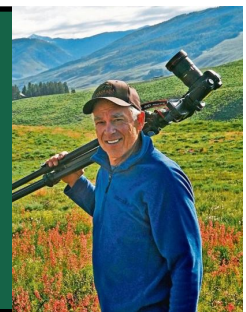
We are citizens of Park County who love where we live. We are passionate about this community and have attachments to the people and this place. We are multi-partisan. We are educators, students, retirees, parents, business owners and more. We advocate for responsible mining and a good balance between mining and residential interests. We want to keep our surface and groundwater clean, our ecosystems healthy and our views amazing. We believe the local environment is the thing that sustains us both physically and spiritually and so it is critical to our well-being and the well-being of our community. Please help us represent the diversity, intelligence, foresight, and compassion of South Park citizens. We sit perched upon the Continental Divide and the responsibility of maintaining healthy watersheds, air, recreational value, flora and fauna is ours collectively. Please contribute to the long-term vision of health by supporting Save South Park.



Save the Date!

John Fielder Lecture and Book signing, November 8.

Time and Place to be announced!



Save South Park Lawsuit

You may have heard that Save South Park lost its lawsuit against the county and High Speed Mining Company. That is true. You might have heard that we had to pay attorney's fees which is FALSE. Attorney's fees were assigned to our former lawyer. We are considering appealing the case to the Denver Appellate court because we sincerely believe our case has merit and that review by judges more familiar with zoning cases might yield a different result. We also believe that the rezoning decision that we are contesting sets a dangerous precedent. It could open the door to more rezoning in the county. Imagine that you live in a residential area and suddenly your neighbor decides to mine on his or her property. All they need to do is ask the County Commissioners to rezone it to mining and they can turn it into an industrial mining zone in a few days.

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Mosquito Creek before (above) and after (below) the spill.



Mosquito Creek Spill: Water treatment system upset at the London Mine

What's that smell? There was a chemical release to Mosquito Creek back in July. If you were any where near the creek you would have smelled a very strong, sickening solvent smell and you might have seen some foam on the creek. The spill was actually a water treatment chemical Minewater LLC, the mine owner, uses to treat water from the London Mine. This treatment will eventually eliminate the cadmium and zinc that the mine has been releasing into the creek for decades. The chemical release was relatively non-toxic. It is unknown if there were effects on fish and wildlife. Save South Park would like to create a communication plan with local emergency response organizations and state regulators so that citizen can be notified when a spill occurs and what the effects of the spill were.



Something New is Afoot

Save South Park has t-shirts for sale featuring our mascot Bigfoot. Long-sleeved, 100% cotton shirts are available for \$20.00. Contact us at savesouthparkco@gmail.com to order yours.

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Where do your donations go?

Save South Park has no employees and no office space. We are 100% driven by committed, local volunteers. Right now, funds are going to help cover the legal expenses that were required to challenge the methods by which our county commissioners decided to rezone land from residential to mining, despite recommendations from the planning commission and from citizens (both groups were ignored in trying to provide input and feedback).

Upcoming Programs and Projects:

- Community Workshops on Mine Reclamation and Water Quality
- Work with the BOCC to establish requirements for mining operators that are compatible with current land use and supported by residents through implementing House Bill 1041 regulations, which give local governments additional authority for planning decisions related to areas or activities of statewide concern. This bill allows communities to identify, designate, and regulate those activities and areas through a local permitting process.
- Encourage and assist mining operations to adopt and become certified in Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA). Create honest, transparent communications from mining companies, their regulators, our elected officials to community members.
- Noise and water quality monitoring
- Work with the county to help further the following goals from the County Master Strategic Plan
 - ◇ Minimize impacts on groundwater supply & quality.
 - ◇ Restore streams and riparian corridors to improve habitat, water quality.
 - ◇ Enrich outdoor recreation opportunities.

Go to savesouthparkco.org to donate via PayPal. Checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 2168, Fairplay, CO 80440. We are a 501(3)(c) non-profit organization.



Just the Facts

Percent of Park County property taxes paid by mining operations.

Slightly more than 1%

Dollars brought to Colorado annually by the Outdoor Recreation Industry.

\$28 Billion

Number of jobs created in Colorado by mining.

19,000

Number of jobs created by the Outdoor Recreation Industry.

229,000



Save South Park Town Hall Meeting

On June 21st, 2018 Save South Park hosted a meeting at Alma Town Hall to open a dialogue with Mine Operators in the South Park area. Approximately 50 community members attended the three hour meeting. Two Independent mediators, graduate students from Metro State, were enlisted by Save South Park to run the meeting and ensure the meeting remained neutral.

The meeting began with Save South Park providing attendees with a variety of information including an overview of the Save South Park goals, an update on the group's lawsuit against the County Commissioners, the potential threat of mercury-contained in waste rock from historic mining, and the possibility of mining owners in Park County complying and obtaining IRMA (Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance) certification.

The meeting was opened for public comments after the presentations. At times the discussion grew contentious and participants began talking over each other. Nancy Comer, Alma Town Administrator, had to calm down participants and threaten to end the meeting.

One miner stated that he was going to build a lake and a million-dollar home on land reclaimed from mining. He was unclear about the time-line of reclamation. He also stated that the Park County Commissioners decided to zone the property in question for mining because of Federal mining laws from the 1880's and that these laws have jurisdiction over zoning laws. He stated that those suing the county and High Speed Mining could "lose their houses" inferring that a counter suit would be filed against the plaintiffs. He had no answer when someone asked why a citizen would lose their home simply by exercising their right as a resident to question a zoning decision. One miner did liken the tremendous noise from the High Speed mine (which exceeded 75 decibels beyond the property line, often for 12 hours a day) to thunder. He asked if people had ever heard thunder. One of the Save South Park members explained that thunder did not go on as long or as loudly as the High Speed Mine which is 6 days a week, 12 hours a day.

Two attorneys in the audience questioned if any miners had met privately with the County Commissioners' since they seemed to have information about the reason for rezoning which was determined behind closed doors. No answer was provided. Soon thereafter, a mine operator was asked to leave after threatening a community member.

Jim Murray, owner of the Alma Placer mine near Alma, agreed with the other miners about the zoning. He suggested the original zoning to residential was wrong and was created in the last hours of a late-night deadline with a crayon. He agreed this zoning did not stand up in other counties when suits were filed by mining operators. He said he had copies of these suits in his brief case but when asked, he could not or would not present them to be copied or reviewed.

He also read a complaint from the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) which he thought was filed by Save South Park. Trevor Messa, who submitted this report to the DRMS, informed Mr. Murray he specifically did not register a complaint and provided the report to simply put the department on notice of potential mercury contamination in Park County. Mr. Murray said stated he did not have mercury in his operation. A former employee of the Alma Placer Mine disagreed saying his job while working for Mr. Murray was to "clean his gold" by removing mercury. Mr. Murray subsequently walked back his statement about having no mercury and said that he and all mines have "trace" amounts of mercury but that it is properly managed.

There was concern from several mine operators that Save South Park's report of mercury being released into the environment was just a way to create panic and fear among the South Park community. Trevor indicated he has heard first-hand reports of large quantities of mercury being discovered by miners processing north of Fairplay. Several of the other miners expressed anxiety about the mines being forced to comply with IRMA regulations. They were told mine operators would absorb the expense.

The meeting ended with a call for ideas on how to best move forward with the miners and Save South Park working together. Suggestions were made for improving communication, discussing specific concerns in small groups and clarification of Save South Park goals.