

**Kimberly MacMillan**

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From: **TOM MACKIN** <[tmmackin@q.com](mailto:tmmackin@q.com)>

Date: Tue, May 3, 2011 at 12:41 PM

Subject: Land withdrawal

To: [nazproposedwithdrawal@azblm.org](mailto:nazproposedwithdrawal@azblm.org)

Please include the attached article as a comment from the AWF on our views of what should be done. Thank you,

Tom Mackin

# Protect wildlife habitat as Roosevelt did a century ago

By Steve Clark, John Koleszar, Tom Mackin and Jim Stipe

When President Theodore Roosevelt visited the Grand Canyon in 1903, the conservation ethic was already entrenched in this big-game hunter. He was one of many forward-thinking sportsmen who had begun in the mid-1800s to organize and conserve big-game habitat and open space in this country.

First, those sportsmen saved Yellowstone's vast wildlife populations from railroad barons and the risks of a new mine. Then, they set their sights on the Grand Canyon.

"The Grand Canyon fills me with awe. It is beyond comparison — beyond description; absolutely unparalleled throughout the wide world," said Roosevelt, standing on the edge of the canyon in 1903. "Do nothing to mar its grandeur, sublimity and loveliness. You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see."

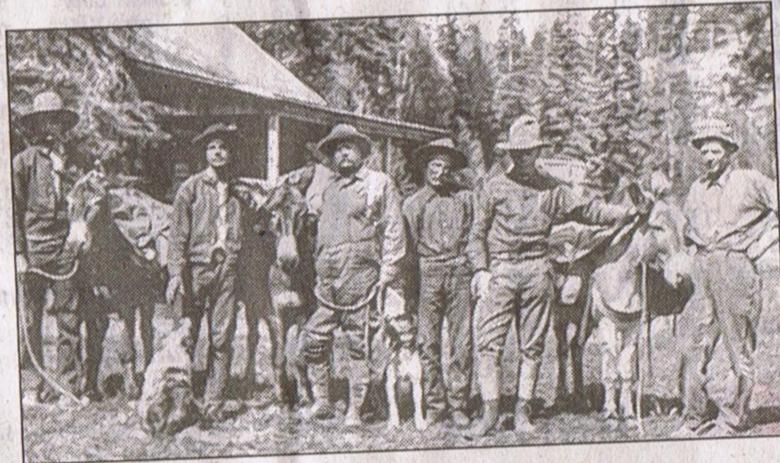
Just three years later, Roosevelt created the Grand Canyon Game Preserve, "set a side for the protection of game animals and birds ... to be recognized as a breeding place therefore." Today,

the game preserve is part of Kaibab National Forest and recognized for its superior elk hunting. The Grand Canyon itself was preserved in 1908, when Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act to create Grand Canyon National Monument.

Yet these lands were not protected in perpetuity. Sportsmen are again fighting to protect wildlife habitat in and around the Grand Canyon. On lands where large elk, mule deer, antelope, turkey, black bear and other wildlife thrive, and near the Colorado River, which provides drinking water and a world-class trout fishery, foreign-owned companies want to mine for uranium to profit from burgeoning world demand.

Recognizing the risk that uranium mining poses to the Grand Canyon and adjacent federal lands and waterways, U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar proposed in 2009 a temporary, two-year moratorium on new uranium mining on 1 million acres of public lands surrounding the park. The public is now weighing in on the future of new uranium mining in this area. And local sportsmen's organizations are supporting the full withdrawal of 1 million acres of federal locatable mineral estate for another 20 years.

These are lands, particularly Units 9 and 10 near the Canyon,



Theodore Roosevelt (third from left) and his hunting party are seen on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon (right) in a photo hung on the wall at El Tovar Hotel. MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC; (RIGHT) XANTERRA PARKS & RESORTS



where Arizona hunters have invested millions of dollars to improve wildlife habitat. Yet road-building and noisy, dusty truck traffic associated with uranium mining could disturb this habitat. Mining operations are known to cause air and water pollution. In fact, past uranium mining has already led to water pollution inside the Grand Canyon and in tributaries of the Colorado River.

Besides being a critical water resource for inhabitants of the desert Southwest, the Colorado River is home to a unique fishery that contains many native species, some threatened and endangered. Additionally, 15 miles of the river below Glen Canyon Dam is a trout-fishing destination. These fisheries offer species diversity and drive tourism.

These concerns for wildlife habitat were echoed by the Arizona Game & Fish Commission, which on March 30 voted to support the full withdrawal of 1 million acres and uphold the moratorium on new mining.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Survey (2006), 1.5 million people participate in hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching in Arizona, contributing \$2.1 billion to the state economy annually. Those dollars are on top of the hundreds of millions of dollars generated by visitors to the Grand Canyon every year.

Let's not simply cast aside our heritage — and its significant contribution to our state economy — to help foreign companies strip our lands for short-term profits. We echo Roosevelt's warning:

"We have gotten past the stage, my fellow citizens, when we are to be pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for two or three years for the use of the present generation, whether it is the forest, the water, the scenery. Whatever it is, handle it so that your children's children will get the benefit of it."

Join us in advocating for the due diligence provided by a 20-year moratorium on new uranium mining here. It's simply not worth the risk.

Steve Clark is president of the Arizona Elk Society. John Koleszar is president of the Arizona Deer Association. Tom Mackin is president of the Arizona Wildlife Federation. Jim Stipe is chairman of the Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited.

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